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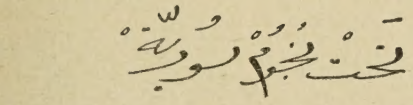
Princess Rahme, of the Ancient House of Haïdar.

Under Syrian Stars



By
PRINCESS RAHME HAIDAR
Author of "Naaman, the Syrian," "Ruth and Naomi," "Esther, the Queen," etc.

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To

THE MULTITUDES

That have comprised my Audiences
In the United States and Canada, who,
by their charming and sympathetic
Affection, inspired these pages,
And
To the Members of the
Ancient and Esteemed House of Haidar,
Be they Christian or Moslem,
THIS BOOK
Is Dedicated

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INTRODUCTION

THE author of this unusual book, Princess Rahme Haidar, is a native of Syria, born under the shadow of Mount Lebanon in the old town of Baalbek, the ancient seat of the rites and worship of Baal. The house from which she comes is one of the most honoured and esteemed throughout Syria, tracing their strange lineage back through Biblical records to the Abrahamic Ishmaelites. Her genealogical records prove that she is a direct descendant of the Arab tribe of Beni-Ghassan who dwelt in the districts of Hauran and governed Damascus from 85 B. C. to 600 A. D.

Princess Rahme received her early education in the American schools in her native land, and, later, coming to the United States, took her degrees from American Universities. She remained in this country that she might increase the knowledge concerning her interesting race, and the land from whence came our modern ideas of civilization. Soon her rare gifts and charming Oriental manner placed her, without peer, in the realm of Biblical-Oriental interpretations and to-day, she is characterized by outstanding pastors and scholars as the finest interpreter of Palestinian life before the American public.

Reared in the midst of an Oriental environment, her brilliant mind became permeated with Biblical lore; trained to appreciate life from the Christian point of view, the author of *Under Syrian Stars* is consequently

especially fitted to interpret to the world the life and customs of the land where Jesus lived. After a recent extended visit sojourning beneath the skies of her beloved Syria, she wrote the present volume, which, both in its accuracy of thought and beauty of presentation, is a notable literary achievement.

This real Syrian Princess and gifted Christian young woman has presented with skilled artistry, brilliant understanding and keen humour a unique interpretation of the people of Palestine—that land of sacred memories.

In *Under Syrian Stars* the Princess Rahme Haidar has made a notable contribution to the Western mind for the clear understanding of Oriental thought and Palestinian life.

GEORGE H. YOUNG,
Associate-President,
Eastern University.

Philadelphia, Pa.

PREFACE

THE motive in writing this book is three-fold; in the first place, I desire to record on the leaves of this tablet an accurate narrative and a deeper insight into that mysterious and most wonderful land of the Saviour, to entertain, to instruct and to inspire. The experiences of my public life upon the lecture platform have afforded me ample opportunity to study the tastes and desires of the Western minds.

Many requests have come to me to prepare an edition recording my intimate knowledge of the land of my birth, its people, their manners and customs, ideals and aspirations, from eminent divines, pastors of leading denominations and outstanding scholars. I have yielded to their requests because I was born, reared and educated in an atmosphere permeated with Biblical lore; for it is only by a native that the East can be rightly portrayed.

The American public has a somewhat meager idea of Syrian culture and civilization, for the number of people who possess sufficient accurate information to instruct the public is limited. In spite of numerous religious and historic ties of relation, the term "Syria and the Syrians" conveys a dim idea to the American mind.

The average tourist, generally, views my country through the eyes and ears of his dragoman, or from incidents gathered in hotels, on railways or upon the crowded thoroughfares, and, consequently, has only

had a peep into the historic East. It is hoped that the following leaves will induce the visitor to venture from the beaten paths; to discover that the East must not be judged from the beggars, the lame, the sick and the blind whom they meet upon the streets; to realize that it takes almost a lifetime to understand many things in the Orient; and, when visiting here, to leave behind their ideals and minds full of Occidental questionings.

Those who remain at home do not know of the wonders that lie across the seas; of the land that is so filled with glories and enchantments. It is the writer's desire to paint herein a graphic description, that my readers who have not visited the land of my fathers may catch an ideal picture of the sacred events that have transpired here. It was not written during a brief summer's sojourn, nor a winter's visit, but is the result of accurate and personal understanding, and to interpret to my gentle readers the best and highest of Syrian culture and civilization. It carries with it the stamp of approval of outstanding officials, authors, historians and writers of Lebanon, Palestine and Egypt, with whom I held consultation while penning it. This volume was compiled beneath the skies of my beloved Syria, and under the glad inspiration of Lebanon, Baalbek, Damascus, the Jordan, the Holy City and the Sea of Galilee.

R. H.

Baalbek, Lebanon,
Syria.

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I

THE LAND OF SACRED MEMORIES

NESTLED within the bounds of the peninsula of Sinai and the Taurus mountains, between the eastern and western limits of the vast Arabian desert and the Mediterranean Sea, lies the little land of Syria, whose history has prevailed throughout the countless centuries; trodden under the heel of the invaders, torn by wars and conquests, but still glories in its ancient heritage, with its generations of kings and judges. The glorious past of Syria, its wonderful rôle as the cradle of the three greatest religions,—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and its connecting link between ancient and modern civilization have served to make her an outstanding country. In Biblical days, it was known as the three Syrias—northern, central, and southern; and, until the mandates of France and England, in 1920, it was divided into five provinces; Aleppo, Damascus, the Lebanon, Beirut and Jerusalem.

The unique location of the country on the shores of the Great Sea, her delightful climate and fertile soil have made her the envy of nations, far and near, and have attracted the invaders throughout all ages. Thus spake the Arabs to the Prophet Mohammed: "Call upon your God to bring forth fountains of living waters like the gardens of Syria." Alexander called Syria "the granary of Rome," while the former kaiser

of Germany said, after his first visit, "Syria is the precious pearl in the crown of the Ottoman Empire."

Syria, geographically, resembles a bridge, serving as a connecting link between Africa, Asia and Europe, but, particularly, connecting the cities between the Euphrates and the Valley of the Nile; and, as a tree shoots forth its roots, so Syria has sent her fruits into the antique world of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Chaldeans and Egyptians. Generations of oppression have come and gone over her ancient cities and have left their indelible imprint upon the land, but the name of Syria, the Mecca of the Soul, the birthplace of Christianity and the home of the early prophets, will forever awaken within us the most sacred and tender memories.

A great many people imagine that Palestine is somewhere in Arabia, that Syria is somewhere in Persia, and the Holy Land is somewhere beyond the grave. This condition of affairs is similar to that of the teacher and the small boy. The boy was asked, "What was Washington's Farewell Address?" and he quickly responded, "Heaven." Some years ago, a young woman was preparing to make a tour of the Holy Land. Just before her departure, she called on an old lady, who had read her Bible from beginning to end. When she heard of her young friend's intended visit to Jerusalem, Galilee, Sidon, Tyre and all the places associated with the life of Christ, the old lady immediately put down her work and, raising her glasses, gazed in astonishment at her and exclaimed, "Well now, I know of all those places in the Bible, but I never thought of them really being on the earth. I had always imagined that Jerusalem was in Heaven."

The Syrians, or, as they are sometimes called, the

Palestinians, are a pure Semitic race and are the direct descendants of those who spoke the Syriac of Biblical days. They are a mixture of Phœnicians, Chaldeans, Philistines, Arameans, and the Arabs of the Hedjaz. Some rightly trace their origin to the Greek and Roman colonists, and others to the Crusaders.

Often in my public work, the question has been asked, "What is the relation of the Jews to the Syrians?" There is, indeed, a strong tie of kinship, as Biblical records relate. The Jews and the Syrians are cousins, or, if I may put it differently, the Jews sprang from the Syrians. Abraham was the first Syrian we know of—a Syrian by birth, a Chaldean by adoption—who, while living in Ur of Chaldea, worshiped the idols of sun and fire. "And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord, thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few and became there a nation, great, mighty and populous" (Deut. 26: 5). But, being a just and virtuous man, and living according to the light which he had, it pleased Jehovah, who appeared unto him and said, ". . . Get thee out of thy country . . . unto a land which I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great" (Genesis 12: 1–2).

The Syrian patriarch hastened to obey the voice of God, and, gathering together all his substance, departed, and, following a sign of Jehovah, came into Syria. The Almighty, taking him up into a high mountain, showed him all the land, from Sodom and Gomorrah to the Great Sea, westward, and from Lebanon, on the north, to the desert of Arabia, on the

south, saying, "Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art northward and southward and eastward and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever" (Genesis 13: 14–17).

So it came to pass, at the end of his days, when Abraham became old and feeble, he called to his bedside his faithful servant of Damascus and commanded him to make a journey to the north and secure a wife for his son, Isaac, *from among his own people.* "And Abraham said unto the eldest servant of his house that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: and I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: but thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac" (Genesis 24: 1–5). And the servant returned with Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, the Syrian, the sister of Laban, the Syrian. And Rebekah became the wife of Isaac. "And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel, the Syrian of Padan-aram, the sister to Laban the Syrian" (Genesis 25: 20). Isaac, likewise, before his death, called his son Jacob and blessed him, and his last urgent message was to be sure to marry not of any others, but of his own people; and said unto him, "Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. And God Almighty bless thee . . . and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee. . . . And Isaac

sent away Jacob: and he went to Padan-aram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah" (Genesis 28: 1–6). Jacob, in obedience, married Rachel, the daughter of Laban, the Syrian. ". . . And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her" (Genesis 29: 20).

Hence, from the twelve sons of Jacob descended the twelve tribes of Israel. But, the distinct division between the two peoples—the Jews and the Syrians—came when God gave the covenant of circumcision to Abraham: "And God said unto Abraham . . . This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee; Every man-child among you shall be circumcised" (Genesis 17: 9–11). So, if we wish to trace the story, even back beyond the Jews, we would find that Jesus Christ was a Syrian. Thus, do I lift my head with honour as a descendant from these, my Biblical ancestors.

II

WHERE NATURE REIGNS SUPREME

AN outstanding feature of the country is a mountain chain extending from the north to the south, and which is divided into two ranges. On the western slope stands Jerusalem, with an altitude of almost 3,000 feet, but, as we come northward, it drops gradually until it is only several hundred feet; then rises again in Mount Lebanon, the highest point in the entire range, with an elevation of 11,000 feet above the Mediterranean Sea.

No matter how often you may hear of Syria and study its history and people, it is difficult to realize its tiny dimensions until you have the opportunity to view the entire country from the top of one of its highest mountains. It was thus that Moses was graciously permitted by Jehovah to view the glory of the land that was to be possessed by the children of Israel. Though small in size, yet, in all this vast American continent, you will not find a more varied climate, a larger yield of produce, nor a greater variety of scenery. The country has attracted the attention of famous botanists from all over the world, and, according to Dr. Post, the noted Syrian and Egyptian botanist, in less than two months, they had gathered more than 1,000 varieties of plants. It was under these inspiring conditions that the Master drew the material for His wonderful sermons and parables.

While travelling in Syria during the summer months, you are struck with the different degrees of temperature you encounter in a day's time. One day you may breakfast in a coast city in the thinnest of dresses, and at night sleep under heavy blankets on the heights of Lebanon; while at Tiberias watch the thermometer standing at 129 degrees, and the next day cross the summit of Sunnine, with its avalanches of snow and its mountain streams. During my sojourn in the heart of Lebanon, I sent my secretary, one August day, to the coast to represent me on a business matter. She came back that same evening and said, "I am so glad you did not go; the heat is simply terrific and the people are complaining everywhere." It was only a distance of less than an hour-and-a-half drive, and yet at the spot where we were it was so cold that you could not place your hand in its waters and count ten comfortably. Upon my first visit to California, I was thrilled and impressed, as I stood upon the hills and beheld the blossoming orange trees, inhaled the perfume of the various kinds of roses and the rich wild flowers. I basked in its glorious sunshine and felt that once again I stood beneath the skies of my native home.

This little country has played an unique rôle in the drama of human events and in the annals of the world. But, strange to say, the knowledge of the great mass of people regarding the historical significance of Syria is exceedingly limited. I am reminded of the story told by Sir Ernest Shackleton of a little maid who brought him tea one morning. He said to her, "My, what a rainy day, Mary! It's almost like the flood." "The flood, sir!" she exclaimed. "Yes, the flood;

Noah, you know, the Ark, Mount Ararat." Mary shook her head in a puzzled manner and answered, "I ain't had no time to read the daily papers lately, sir."

Upon my arrival in the United States, I was really astonished to find so many people knew nothing of Syria. Often, when introduced, the chairman would ask, "Well, where is Syria? I do not seem to recall the place." Others, of the highly educated people would say, "Oh! yes, you mean Assyria, do you not?" They do not seem to realize that Syria and Assyria are two different countries. The Assyrians dwell in the regions of Persia, Mesopotamia and Kurdistan; while the Syrians are the inhabitants of the Holy Land. In Palestine, almost every school boy or girl can repeat from memory the names of every state and capital in the Union, and every province in the Dominion; at least, I was able, when but ten years of age, to come before my teacher and by memory give a sketch of this country, tell of the climate and name in order every state and province, together with their capitals, in one long breath, beginning with Halifax, Nova Scotia and ending with Sacramento, California.

It has been intimated by some writers of the Western world that the Master was born in a poor, uncivilized country, whose inhabitants were mere underserfs; that He preached His simple messages to unlearned fishermen. On the contrary, there were active, self-possessed men who were free from ignorance that generally characterizes the rustics. It is difficult, indeed, for us to understand that in His days there lived in that land an immense population of people, who had built up a civilization that gave them a foremost position among the nations of the world.

There were the brilliant cities of Sidon, Tyre, Damascus, Jerusalem and Tiberias, with their famous schools and seats of organized learning, to which wise men came to learn at the feet of the masters and rabbis and centurions.

The first Christian church was established at Antioch, and it was the church of Antioch, Syria, that made the first offerings to the home mission work in the city of Jerusalem; moreover, she sent her noblest men, such as Paul and Barnabas, to carry the first glad tidings to the heathen lands. Does it not behoove us to keep in our memories the history of this little land—a land that gave birth to Christianity, and furnished the world with its most precious gift, the Living Word; a country which has contributed to the development of our present culture and civilization; for my Phœnician ancestors were the first to discover the laws of navigation and to disseminate the alphabet. They carried on a vast intercourse with Egypt, perfected the science of chemistry, won fame by their manufacture of the finest crystal glass, were the first to discover the costly dye of the Tyrean purple, which later became so popular with the ancient kings; and gave to the universe its treasures in poetry.

But, alas! when I recall the ancient glories of my native land, which of old gave laws, rulers and conquerors, and which gave promise of a wonderful civilization, I lament over her waning glory, and that she should play such an unassuming part in the world's progress. It is needless to relate how she has decayed for the past seven centuries under the rule and despotism of nations, and how her cities, once so entrancing, have faded into oblivion. Yet, after my recent visit, I

can see that she is struggling to awaken from her lethargy and is endeavouring to regain her former power among the nations of the world. She is attracting to her clime tourists, artists and archælogists. Some come to study, some to worship, many out of curiosity; but all have the one desire to behold the grave where our Lord was laid.

III

AN INTIMATE GLIMPSE OF MY LIFE

UNDER the fragrant cedars of Lebanon, forty miles from the ancient city of Damascus, lies my birthplace, the old town of Baalbek. In the early days, Baalbek was the seat of Oriental worship, and its temples of Baal were the most imposing in all the East. They were erected for the inhabitants of the cities, towns and villages of the plain and the entire district of El-Bekaa. I was strictly reared according to the faith of my fathers, within the walled gardens of our home, surrounded by orchards and vineyards, and where age-long customs were ever present. My early education was received at home and in the English school at Baalbek. Although my every wish and desire was gratified, yet deep within my soul was an indescribable longing and a reaching-out for something higher, something nobler.

As the years went by, there grew up between my father and some of the American missionary-educators a mutual friendship, which later opened the way for me, contrary to the customs of my people, to enter the American Seminary for Girls at Sidon, near Tyre, and about two days' journey on horseback from my home. There, for the first time, I came in contact with the Western world, its people and their modes of living. There, after a deep and careful study of the Word, and after a long struggle with the burden of my sins,

I came face to face with the question, "Where are you going to spend eternity?" My people sent me there purposely for further education, but there, at the ancient Sidon was revealed to me the highest and deepest meaning of education; namely to increase one's capacity to know God and to make Him known to others. For after all, is not this the great purpose of education and of life? For to know Him and His Son, Jesus Christ, is a life eternal.

During my course at Sidon, I often pictured the beauties of the new land—not only a land of liberty, but a land of opportunity, and the desire to sail forth to its shores grew keener and keener. I had become enamoured with everything Occidental. My greatest ambitions were to speak the English language fluently and to dress in European garb. At length I prevailed upon my people to permit me to come to the United States to complete my education; and, in company with friends, I embarked upon my great adventure. Often, indeed, do I look back to my advent upon the American shores with amusement and delight. We left Syria, going by the way of Italy and France. While in Paris, I decided to change my native costume for European dress. (Previously, I had learned that America secured her styles from Paris.) But the article that pleased me the most was the hat. Not realizing the difference in seasons, I purchased the largest and most elaborate one I could find. The mist was slowly rising as we steamed into the harbour of New York on that December day, and, as I gazed upon the vista spread out before me, with that superb Statue of Liberty in the foreground, emotions arose within me such as I had never before experienced. But, alas,

imagine my dismay and disappointment, when we landed and were greeted by friends, who told me, most graciously, that I had gotten a summer hat instead of a winter one.

Shortly after my arrival, I entered one of the higher institutions of learning in the East, where I prepared myself for leadership. Here, a new field confronted me. I was not thoroughly versed in the English language, nor in the strange manners and customs of the new land, but I had ventured forth determined to win. Night after night I burned the midnight oil in an endeavour to attain the end I had in view—and, as a result, received my diploma with honours, the youngest in my class. Following my graduation, under the auspices of the Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society, I was sent to establish and superintend an educational center for my own people in the city of Los Angeles. It flourished rapidly and soon harboured ten different nationalities, with night classes in English and citizenship for the older people. During this time, I was taking my post-graduate work at the University of Southern California, and, at the same time, responding to numerous calls from various churches, clubs and organizations on the Pacific coast to present addresses on my Los Angeles work, but particularly on my native country.

During the few years I had been in America, I soon came to realize that there was a great demand for enlightening the Western world regarding the country of my birth; and, heeding the advice of some of the leading pastors, scholars and authors, I took up the platform work. This, however, was not with the consent of my family. Indeed, as a native of the Holy Land,

and understanding the true qualities of my people, it became my earnest desire to present a vivid picture of Syria, what she has been for centuries past, what she has achieved, and what she is at the present time. The motives which prompted me to take up this public work were not for fame nor money, but to create a deeper interest and a better understanding of that sacred land.

But my life's work has not always been a path of roses. There have been the ups and the downs, the shadows and the rainbows. Often, have I felt as Moses did when he stood with the children of Israel between the Egyptians and the Red Sea. He murmured and complained unto the Lord. But Jehovah answered: "Wherefore criest thou unto me? Lift up thy rod and speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward" (Exodus 14: 15).

My experiences in my lecture work have been varied and many. From the outset, I did not restrict my appearances to a certain type of entertainment, for I had determined to present messages for all. Hence, I have spoken from the leading and the most conservative pulpits of both the United States and Canada; entertained on lyceums and Chautauquas, before Kiwanis, Rotary and Lion Clubs, before civic organizations, with Douglas Fairbanks and other famous movie producers, with government men who were serving as United States ambassadors to foreign countries, before business men's and business women's clubs, exclusive women's clubs, both literary and musical, Y. W. C. A.'s and Y. M. C. A.'s, universities and assemblies; I have presented benefit entertainments for charitable organizations, served under the National

Near East Relief, and have appeared many times from the stage.

Likewise, the people whom I have met represent every standing in life, from John D. Rockefeller to the neediest among the slums; from Kid McCoy to the most religious divine, Dr. W. B. Riley; from the stars of the movie world to the humblest evangelist and missionary; I have been entertained in the homes of senators, governors, mayors, clergymen and those prominent in social affairs. I have travelled the road from my mission school in Los Angeles to the brilliant lights of the stage.

One evening, while on a Chautauqua circuit, just before I stepped in for my program, the chairman wished to know to what denomination I belonged. After a moment's hesitation, I replied: "Way back in Syria, my people belong to the Mother Church, with its headquarters at Antioch, which is similar to the Church of England; and, according to the faith of my fathers, when only six months old, I was immersed three times —in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. When I grew up, my people sent me to the American schools, where, after a thorough and careful study, I joined the church. The work in Syria is done largely by the Presbyterians, with some co-operation of the Congregationalists. Later, I came to this country for further education, entered a Baptist school in Chicago and graduated there, after which I took my post-graduate work in public speaking at the University of Southern California. This is a very strong Methodist university. So, I am now really what we call in America a Methodo-Bapto-Presby-Congregationo."

IV

THE CITY OF THE KNIGHTS

IT would be well for us to consider what the ancient Sidon is like, not because of the tender memories so closely associated with my early education, but because of the unique rôle it has written upon the pages of history. According to traditions, after the flood, Tyre and Sidon were the first cities to be built. Beginning soon afterwards, the Sidonians became the pioneers of all the earth in art, industry and commerce, and, for twenty-five centuries after, held undisputed sway over the trade of the world. Josephus says, "Sidon and her daughter Tyre, all through the annals of history remained free cities; they never fell under the conquests of the Israelites." In these two cities occurred the brilliant events of the antique world. Sidon soon became famous for its palaces and fountains, fanes and altars; and the wisdom of the Sidonians in astronomy, philosophy and navigation spread throughout the earth, and excelled above all in the east country. Ancient authors have described it as "renowned equally for skill and arts, science and literature," and, according to Solomon, in 1000 B. C., "there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians" (1 Kings 5:6).

During the days of our Lord, Sidon still clung to its brilliancy and retained her power as a maritime

city; and was frequently visited by Him. "And from thence He arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon" (Mark 7:24). But, after 325 A. D., the fame of Sidon sank into memories; and little was known of her until the Crusaders laid siege to her in 1111. For thirty years thereafter, she remained the headquarters of the Knights Templar. From that time on, her history is one of sieges and desolation. It was completely ruined by the Saracens. Thus, the once "great Sidon" (Joshua 11:8) gradually decayed; and every hope had vanished from her battlements when the famous Fakh-er-Din built a palace and fortress there. At the present time, relics of her former beauty and of her greatness are constantly being unearthed and carried off to enrich the museums of the land. She, who was once great, who built up cities where life was one of splendour, to-day sits dismantled, a sleepy old town, with its narrow winding streets that are so characteristic of the East, and, above all, no European dress.

A portion of the old walls still remain, and at a distance of two miles from the city gates lies the ancient king's cemetery, cut in the solid rock and extending mile after mile under the mountain, one of the most interesting old relics of bygone days. The city boasts of a few Mohammedan mosques, several English mansions and two American institutions, one for boys and one for girls. The Girls' Seminary is located overlooking the blue waters of the Mediterranean, and is the only self-supporting school in Syria.

Dr. George Ford, the president of the school, lives in a magnificent home, surrounded on all sides by gardens of fruits and flowers. Recently, he purchased

a plot of ground outside the city walls. While excavating, less than ten feet below the surface, he came upon precious treasures of the early Phœnicians. The vessels unearthed contained costly jewels and much gold and silver. He, also, discovered the sarcophagus of a Phœnician king; which he planned to bring to America, but was unsuccessful, for the French government forbade his taking them out of the country.

The finest collection, however, of sarcophagi and statuary were unearthed at Sidon by a Turkish archæologist, and are now in the museum at Constantinople. These wonderful marble slabs were hidden in caves far below the ground, so that they escaped all the centuries of war and ruin which swept over the country. Here we find Phœnician work which is intact, although chiselled from three to four centuries before Christ. Every detail is as perfect as when first made, each tiny statue on the tombs untouched by time or marauders, a priceless find for art.

Sidon is surrounded by orchards of olives, dates, figs, mulberries and bananas, which extend for miles. The oranges of Sidon are famous throughout Europe, for which she is rightly called "the Mother of Oranges." As we view the city, sitting in the midst of her gardens, ever gazing out upon the sea, we ask, "Where is thy former power? Why cannot thy people awaken and regain their former standing among the nations?" And from those rocky sepulchres comes back the reply, "Because of the day that cometh . . . to cut off from Tyrus and Sidon every helper that remaineth" (Jeremiah 47:4).

V

A MYSTERIOUS RACE

OFTEN do I liken my people unto an Oriental rug. Did you ever make a thorough and careful study of an Oriental rug? I mean a genuine one. Stop for a moment; gaze upon its vista of silken sheen, its marvellous designs, its mixture of harmonious and beautifully blended colours, and bending low, you can almost hear it whisper tales of romance, tragedy, deprivation and adventure. Ah! it brings to your mind the little maiden, way back in her desert tent, with graceful and pliable fingers weaving a colourful dream of a masterpiece for her future lord and master. It reveals to you tribal traditions and the rise and fall of nations.

"The Land of Morning" weaves into rugs its noblest emotions, all of its colourful ecstasies; they are full of mystic folk-lore and Oriental splendour; and tell much of bygone people and religions; in it blend the little brown faces, sunshine, the half-closed dreamy eyes and a beating heart. Each tiny design or loop or curve has its own sacred meaning, tied by the weaver. It may be a love token or a prayer—only Allah knows. And not until we understand these significant symbolisms can we fully appreciate the true value and the deep charm of an Oriental rug. So are my people—proud, mysterious and hard to understand.

A very pious old gentleman, who believed in family

worship, gathered his flock about him every evening and read to them a portion of the Scriptures. And, as was his custom, he would always emphasize just what chapter he would read the following day. His two sons, who were not inclined to be so religious, got together one night and decided to play a joke on the old man; so, they took the family Bible, turned to the chapter announced for the evening, and carefully pasted the leaves together. At the usual hour of worship, they gathered around the table once more. The father picked up the Book and read as follows: "And Noah took unto himself a wife and she was"—(turning the page)—the old gentleman was quite puzzled. He read the passage again, and again for the third time,—"And Noah took unto himself a wife and she was—(turning the page)—three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits deep, tarred inside and out." Then, thoughtfully and reverently stroking his beard, he said, "Now, my boys, it just goes to show how wonderfully and fearfully we're made up." The old man was not far off in his interpretation; for the Orientals are, indeed, strangely and fearfully made up—that is why they are hard to understand.

The eloquent poet has truly expressed it when he said:

> *"East is east and west is west,*
> *And never the twain shall meet."*

The Syrians are a haughty and resolute race, but beneath all this lies his deep sense of trustfulness and courtesy; he is broad and open-hearted, as those who

dwell in the sunshine. He is deeply religious; and his emotions are too often misunderstood by the Occidentals, for in no other country of the universe does religion play such an important rôle in the every-day life of a nation. It is hardly fair to class the Syrians among the incapable and helpless. Ah, no! for they are eager and earnest students and shrewd character readers; they possess an accurate ear for music, and their love for learning is great. In various parts of the country are seats of learning; and in five years they are taught the Arabic, French and English languages, together with physics, medicine, chemistry, geometry, rhetoric and astronomy. They have retained much of their old Arab culture, while, on the other hand, they have displayed a strong inclination for modern progress, particularly in the economic sphere.

Thanks to the keen intelligence, industriousness and progressiveness of my people, Syria was the most important and prosperous province in the Ottoman empire. To-day, as in olden days, we find that the love of trade and adventure have carried them to the four quarters of the globe. Lord Cromer has called them "the Cream of the East," and once said, "We, the English, could have acquired Egypt, but without the Syrians we could not have ruled it." All my people want is to be placed in a position favourable to the development of their intellect and they will rise side by side with any other peoples on earth. Assuredly, they are as capable of playing the rôle of an independent nation as are the Russians, Bulgarians and Greeks.

The Syrians are a temperamental race. One day you may see two men in the depths of a heated quarrel, oblivious to anything about them, and the next day

see the same two walking arm in arm, the very best of friends. This is an inherited trait. The story is told of Saladin, who, while repulsing an attack of the Crusaders, incidentally heard that Richard the Lionhearted was seriously ill. Immediately, he sent to him his best physicians and gifts of choicest fruits and wine.

The average tourist often does not see the culture and manner of life of the upper classes. He has rushed through the country under the guidance of an agency, and has not taken sufficient time to see and enjoy the glories of nature. He has not visited the fashionable homes, nor has he come in contact with the real life of the Easterners, and, to my great disappointment, has returned with an erroneous idea of the Orient. He, too wrongly, judges the country by the standards set by its peddlers, or by the beggars whom he meets upon the streets. His exclamation of delight and wonder from the deck of the steamer, when nearing my country, becomes all too critical as soon as he lands and sees only the dirty, narrow streets and the hungry dogs.

The winter's tourist can never write a book or lecture upon his adventures and incidents of the Holy Land, aided by the pictures he has snapped in his brief sojourn; nor can he give a true insight into a land and people that is alien to him. For the art, culture and deep soul of the East are not to be obtained in a flitting glance. Yet, some of our great men have made a close study and have returned to give a true picture of Syria and its people, but these are generally those who have had long residence in the country and who have become accustomed to look at the world through the eyes of a native. There is always that irresistible

call that lures you back again and again, after you have once visited there under the proper surroundings. It is similar to the fascination that California has for the Eastern people, although my country has not, as yet, the superabundance of real-estate orators.

Paderewski, while making one of his tours throughout the United States, arrived in a small western city. Finding that he had several hours before his entertainment, he decided to take a walk. It so happened that he passed a house upon which was a sign: "Miss Augustine, Instructor in Music. Lessons fifty cents an hour." Hearing someone trying to execute one of Chopin's nocturnes, he rang the bell; and was immediately recognized by the young lady who came to the door. Paderewski, after a short conversation, played the nocturne for her and spent an hour instructing her. Some few years later, returning to the town, he had occasion to pass the same house. And this time a very prominent sign greeted his eyes, which read something like this: "Miss Augustine, Pupil of Paderewski. Piano Lessons—two dollars an hour." This reminds me of the lecturer who has made the "six weeks'" trip to Palestine, comes back and feels wholly competent to "spill" his knowledge over the entire country.

It has always been a curious fact to me why the average American and European traveller never brings back the better picture of the country, but rather the crude, dirty side of it. Recently, journeying from Baalbek to Damascus, we stopped at the little village of Reyak for lunch. As we were dining, the train for Beirut pulled in, and suddenly there arose a great commotion. Looking out of the window, we saw a large crowd gathered about an officer who was taking a

woman from a wandering band of gypsies into a compartment. She was in a most dishevelled condition, and was weeping bitterly, pleading to the officer to release her. On the ground stood a tiny lad, crying as though his heart would break, raising his hands to his mother to be taken along. From time to time, men and women of the tribe would come and, wringing their hands and pulling their hair, beg the police to set the woman free. My attendant came back to me with the story. The woman and her husband, five years before, had stolen the baby girl of a wealthy Syrian family, who, during that time, had made every effort to locate the child. The week previous, the husband had been caught and taken to Beirut, but the woman, with the child, had escaped. She had just been found near the village; and was to follow her husband to prison. However, every effort of the police failed to make her reveal the hiding place of the little girl.

As we stood discoursing upon the matter, a member of a group of Americans, who had been attracted by the uproar, pulled out his kodak and snapped the picture. That was one time I sincerely wished cameras had never been invented. Many questions arose in my mind. Why did he wish the picture of so tragic a scene? Would he tell, as they so often do, that this was the type of people in my country? Truly, he had not caught the real spell of the Holy Land.

But this glimpse of the people of Syria would be incomplete without a brief narration of the spoken language. The mellow Arabic, of which we have proudly boasted for centuries, is one of the richest languages in the world. It was shaped by a race who had learned in the silences of desert and mountain to

dream and to wait, and cannot be other than poetic. They watched their flocks under the Syrian skies, those shepherds of old, and waited for the first beams of the rising sun to gild the tops of the mountains, and then called yesterday "the Departed," and to-morrow —"bookra." Indeed, the modern speech has been cast in the same mould as when Solomon penned his Song of Songs, and has been preserved in all its wealth of poetry, imagery and beauty of expression, a language whose subtleties are lost entirely when translated to our matter-of-fact modern tongue. Everyone uses a verse of poetry or a proverb to explain his statement. To read the old Arab stories in the native tongue is to feast on the nectar of the gods poured forth from chalices of purest thought.

A stranger cannot receive a correct impression of the Arabic, hearing it spoken only on the streets, or by rough dragomen. In order to appreciate its charm, they must hear it in the better homes, or as it falls from the lips of a native scholar. The story is told, "that when our first fathers were tempted in the Garden of Eden, the serpent, wishing to beguile Eve, addressed her in Arabic, as the best means of persuasive eloquence; Eve entreated her husband in Persian, the language of affection; while Gabriel, sent to expel them from Eden, after vainly addressing them in various languages, finally succeeded in driving them away by the use of the Turkish."

A short time ago, at the entrance to the leading hotel in Damascus, I saw a lady who was besieged by a little boy beggar. The boy, coming toward her with outstretched hand, cried out, "Madame, henney alieya, ateenny allah yateekee." The lady, gathering her skirts

about her, shrank away from him and exclaimed, "Get away from me—go on!" Again the boy insisted, "Madame, ateenny allah yateekee—baksheesh, baksheesh." "Get away from me!" she continued. "Don't you understand me?" Then, turning to a friend, she remarked, "My, what a harsh, ugly language!" I longed to inform her that the language of the streets and the language of the beggar is not the language of the country. But what can we do with such a class of people? The Government does not provide for them. We have no system in Palestine or Syria.

The picture of the blind and the beggar, the burden of the visitor, may be your first impression of the East, but do not let it destroy your pleasure. I must admit that from the moment you set foot upon Holy Ground you are pestered and annoyed by them, and the very first Arabic word you hear is "baksheesh"—and again, the last one upon your departure, "baksheesh, baksheesh!" But, really, you cannot help but love them, when a brown little face smiles up at you singing his sweet song, "Ya, Mademoiselle, rikhey alieya." —"Oh, Mademoiselle, let your heart be tender toward me."

VI

THE SUBTLE SPELL OF THE HOLY LAND

THE architecture of the Syrian homes is one of passing interest. Brilliant colours are used freely on the houses of the better classes, and the bright red and green tiled roofs are conspicuous everywhere. The homes of the common people consist of four stone walls with one door and two windows; the roof is flat, and the ceiling is of logs. Above the logs, earth and crushed rocks are rolled down with a heavy stone roller until it becomes as hard as asphalt. After the winter's rain, it affords a fertile soil for grass and weeds; so it is true to-day as in the days of old—"when the grass upon the housetops withered." In every flat roof is a round hole, large enough to admit a man's arm, through which wheat, corn and other winter provisions are thrust down to the floor below. One can readily understand how the four men let down the man of the palsy upon his bed to Jesus of Nazareth (Mark 2: 3), for it would be no task, by pulling away the earth and thorns, to enlarge the hole to permit the lowering of the bed upon which the sick of the palsy lay.

It is difficult for us in America to imagine what an important part the housetops play in the life of the Syrians. During the summer months, it becomes a veritable rendezvous. Here prayers are said, wheat is laid out to dry and the whole provisions for the win-

ter are prepared. From the housetop calls and instructions are given; deaths and marriages are proclaimed. Here, on the balmy moonlight nights, they gather around their water pipes and listen to the happenings of the day, to prose and poetry; or enjoy to the fullest their songs and dances to the accompaniment of native instruments. It becomes theater, concert hall and public gathering place, all in one.

The upper classes enjoy many comforts and conveniences. Their homes are tastefully planned, and their interiors are furnished with the choicest of Oriental rugs and richly ornamented furniture, and are often truly palatial. The rooms are paved with native tile, and about the edges are writings in Arabic, taken from the sayings of the Koran or from Proverbs. The American Consulate in Beirut is perhaps one of the best examples. It was built by a Russian count, who spared no money in erecting it. The salon is surrounded on all sides by huge mirrors placed in the walls and reaching from the divans almost to the high ceilings. Above the mirrors are written inscriptions from the famous ancient poets, and many of the proverbs of Solomon. The entire ceiling is hand painted in the most gorgeous of Eastern colourings. The approach from the entrance to the salon is a winding stairway of purest white marble, sculptured to the finest degree. Upon the death of the count, it passed into the hands of his secretary, a Syrian, who had been his companion for many years. At the present time, the palace is rented to the American consul, who pays the elaborate sum of one thousand Egyptian pounds ($5,000) a year.

But if you wish to visit the East—the real East of

your dreams—come with me to the ancient city of Damascus. Along the dark, winding streets, with balconies meeting overhead and a sense of mysticism pervading all, until we find ourselves before a wall with an iron gate. Silently we are admitted through a smaller room into a courtyard with fountains splashing their cool suggestion of running water. It is opened to the air, where the gentle breezes from the garden, wafting the perfume of orange and jasmine, enter freely.

Across the squares of tile we make our way, led by a servant, when, as we enter through heavy curtains, lo! a richness almost indescribable greets our eyes—tapestries of silk, satins and stuffs of a thousand shades, lie about in confusion. On the walls and upon the floor are the richest of Oriental rugs and kelims—such exquisite designs and colours, the like of which we have never before seen. By a tabouret, on a divan of teak inlaid with mother-of-pearl and carved with the gifted cunning of a forgotten hand, sits, cross-legged, an old Syrian poet clad in bagging trousers, a mantle of gold over his shoulders and a graceful "kafiyee" of crimson silk, held in place by a golden cord as an "akkal"; lost in the delights of his native pipe. At one side is an old Syrian harp, with a robe that once served an Ishmaelitish prince thrown carelessly over it; —a harp, whose strings touched by the masterly hand of David, was wont to soothe the ears of Saul. As we stand before these unknown treasures of the Orient, we are, for a moment, breathless with amazement and delight. Here, of a truth, is the East; we have found it at last, and it far exceeds in brilliancy than ever our dreams had painted it.

The hours slip silently by as we sit enthralled at the feet of the poet and listen as he unfolds to us the wisdom and poetic lore of the East. The delicious perfumed coffee is brought in, and, as we sip it, the strings of the "el-Oud" are touched by master hands; and we hear the strains of a weird melody. Thus, we are carried far across the realms of the universe, and are in the very presence of Haroon-el-Raschid, himself, amid the veritable regions of an Arabian Night.

Equally interesting is the manner of the cooking, many of the dishes taking hours to prepare. You are invited to partake of a feast. On the table is "kibbey"—sweetmeats, or "beklaway"—rice,—"leben, yebrak, mojederra, yebrak-arish, sheikh-el-meshy, meshy-cousa," and it is the custom for the honoured guest to be served with Arabian coffee. The pottage, or mojederra, is Esau's favourite dish, very common and very ancient, made with lentils and prepared cracked wheat. I mean, by the prepared cracked wheat, that the wheat is boiled, dried in the sun and cracked. The lentils and cracked wheat are cooked together with onions previously fried in olive oil. This is what Jacob made the pottage of when he tempted Esau and bought his birthright. The famous dish, however, tastes far better than the recipe sounds.

"Kibbey" is the Syrian plum pudding, mince pie and roast lamb, all in one. It is made by pounding meat in a stone mortar. The meat, taken from the leg of the lamb, is pounded and pounded and pounded until it becomes a soft pulp; then mixed together with the prepared cracked wheat, and pounded again for another whole hour. It is seasoned with salt, pepper,

mint and sweet pazzles; then made into large hollowed balls or cakes, stuffed with minced meat, pine nuts, fried onions and "semny"—Syrian butter; and then it is baked, roasted, or stewed. This is the national dish, the dish that contains the fourteen elements of food. Should there be any wife, or wives, among my readers who have a grumbling husband, because you do not serve him a palatable dish, I would heartily recommend this recipe, with the hope that it may restore peace in the family; on one condition, however, and that is providing the husbands do the knocking—rather, I should say the pounding.

Another favourite dish, the "yebrak-arish," is a roll of fresh tender grape leaves, stuffed with rice and tiny bits of lamb, flavoured with the essence of tomato and pine nuts, and then stewed. In shape it resembles a tiny sausage-like affair; of which an American professor once said that "if there were sausages in heaven, he was certain they would be of this kind."

On tours throughout Syria, one passes field after field of "simsum," a wheat-like plant, which flourishes with practically no cultivation. It requires no plowing and no water. It is planted in May and harvested in August. The stalks contain numerous three-cornered pods which, when opened, reveal four separate chambers with about eighty of the tiniest, whitest seeds. When it is harvested, the pods are roasted in huge vats until they crack open; and the seeds, which have become a delicious brown, are extracted. They are then crushed between stone rollers until every bit of the oil is out. The oil is cooked until it forms what is known as "teheeney." This is put into vats, a little sugar added, and enough gum mastic to hold it together,

and then boiled again until it reaches the proper consistency, and flavoured with the essence of rose or the spirit of orange blossom. It becomes a creamy colour, called "halaway," and is one of the most delicious sweets for which Syria is famous. Often it is made with the crushed or whole nuts or the original "simsum" seed. It is served in cafés with Arabian coffee, but its favourite use is in sandwiches, really more of a dish than a sweetmeat, very nourishing, and is given abundantly to growing children. "Halaway" is known to Arabs, Greeks and Romans, with only a slight change in the name. Hence, it must be an ancient dish of three thousand years.

The head chef of the Emir had died. Throngs crowded about their lord and master, not because of grief for the departed chef, but because by his death the gates of fame had opened for them. Each one tried to surpass the others in preparing a delicious and tempting dish for the Prince, that he might be the one to fill the coveted position, and thereby gain the honoured title, "the head chef to the Emir," and become the monarch over his digestive system. Days and weeks passed, and nothing was announced as to the chosen one—only the whisperings and discussions among the servants. But each one secretly hoped, by the help of Allah, he might be advanced to this noble position. The Emir did not grow weary of their clamourings, but, rather, it appeared to please him. He asked each of the aspirants to prepare the most elaborate dish that he was capable of making, and to bring it before his councillors and viziers that they might impartially pass judgment upon it.

On the fourth day of the month, the proclamation

went forth that all soothsayers, councillors and attendants should gather around the Prince as he was seated beneath the orange trees in his favourite courtyard, and taste the various kinds of dishes and sweets that had been carefully prepared. But alas! here was such an array of tempting and delicious foods that the judges were bewildered and knew not what to answer.

In the midst of the confusion, Ali, the attendant, hastily announced, "Oh, m' lord, the Emir, there is a stranger at the door who desires an audience with thee." "Let him come," the Prince graciously replied, and all anxiously awaited the entrance of this strange person; when, lo! through the curtains came a man whose long hair was filled with dust, beneath his shaggy eyebrows flashed black eyes, the end of his "kafiyeh" thrown carelessly over his shoulder, and shaking the dust from his hairy mantle. Approaching the Emir, he bowed and said, "Long live the Prince, whose fame has spread throughout the nation! I have heard of your request and of your need of a skillful head chef. I have long practiced this art throughout the kingdom, before governors, princesses, viziers and councillors. Behold, this day I hastened thither from Damascus, that I might gain your favour; hence, I am prepared to fulfill unto your lordship every test that you might wish to place before me."

The Emir smiled, and a hush fell over the assembly. Even Ibraham and Ahmed, upon whom the choice had been cast, forgot, for the time, their deep-seated enmity and rivalry, and quietly conversed together. In the silence, the Prince questioned the stranger standing before him. "What is your opinion of the beneficial use of olive oil and of the dishes prepared with it?"

The chef, gazing over the company, paused for a moment, and, thinking the Prince desired these dishes for himself, replied, "The oil, O royal Emir, is one of the most precious gifts from Allah, and the greatest invention of mankind. It is butter without grease, to be used on fast days; fat that never becomes putrid; a most superior fluid that is derived from the most superior of trees. It is healing, easily digested, appetizing, light, priceless when it becomes old; and many kings have preferred it to meat."

The Prince, pleased with these shrewd utterances, desired to continue this pleasant interview. "I do not agree with you that all these attributes belong to the oil, for to me it represents the meat for the poor." But the chef, with the wisdom of a sage, quickly responded, "Should we delve deeper into this investigation, we should find that there is no comparison between meat and oil. True, there is much that is harmful in the oil—it burns the stomach, dries the throat, and its steam causes pains in the head. On the other hand, meat is necessary for everything. Broth, kibbey, meshey and the various kinds of dishes are not nutritious unless they contain a proper amount of meat."

The entire group burst into loud laughter, but, when the Emir remained stern, knowing glances were exchanged, and the great throng subsided into silence. Then the Prince resumed his interrogations: "But, from the wise men and physicians, I have long heard that the excessive use of meat causes a fattiness around the heart and brings on rheumatism; and there is no remedy for such an illness but a strict diet. I have adhered closely to this, and have strongly advocated the

use of vegetables. Above all, I give the preference to the egg-plant."

The wise chef, nodding his head, signified his agreement. "Ah, yes, your excellency, thou hast spoken truly. Vegetables are the easiest to digest, and the egg-plant is the most delicious and beneficial of them all. It is tasty when fried—tasty when baked—tasty when 'mnesilee' (stewed)—tasty when stuffed—tasty when prepared with oil—tasty as 'sheikh-el-meshy' (stuffed with rice and the tiny bits of the lean of lamb). The egg-plant is meat without gristle and fish without bones."

Here, the Prince, unable to conceal his amusement, interrupted: "But one day I was in agony after I had eaten of the egg-plant."

Fearlessly, the chef responded, "Live m'lord, if we investigate still further, we find there are times when it does cause suffering,—it is black, it is crooked, and it causes heat in the blood; hard to digest, thereby causing headaches."

The Emir burst into a fit of laughter, and, looking at the chef, said, "Woe unto you; you have not been able to corroborate a single statement which you have uttered." Quickly the chef, coming forward, returned, "I crave your forgiveness, O m'master, but am I the servant of the oil, the meat, the egg-plant, or am I the servant of his highness, the Emir?"

And again the Emir, turning to his viziers, said, "Verily, this man is a keen and cunning philosopher. Hasten, O Mansoor, and place upon him the insignia of his rank."

(A true incident in the life of Emir, Prince, Beschir Chehhab, as related to me by one of his ancestors.)

VII

LEFT-HANDED PEOPLE

SYRIA has many inconsistencies. For instance, the men wear flowing robes and the women bloomers. When a boy enters a sacred place, instead of removing his headgear, he slips off his shoes; when he reads, he begins at the back of the book. A Christian is summoned to prayer by a bell, while a Mohammedan by the call of a man's voice. An European, when he wishes to write, puts the paper upon which he is writing on a table before him, whereas a Syrian prefers to hold the paper in one hand and write with the other. An European, when he desires to wash his hands, always pours water into the basin first, whereas a Syrian prefers to have the water poured over his hands. A Syrian will amuse himself by watching others dance, while a Westerner will and must always join in the dance. Oriental dress is loose, except for infants, who are wrapped in swaddling clothes, while Western dress is tight (and sometimes rather short) except for infants, who are dressed in loose, flowing robes. Affability requires a great deal of generosity; if you have a friend, you must confidentially place in his hands all your possessions—but not your wives.

The word "thank you" is not found in the Arabic language. We say, "ana memnoon," which means "I am overcome with your generosity," or "ekther Allah

khirek"—"May Allah abundantly increase your wealth." Should you wish to sympathize with those in sorrow, they will serve you with the unsweetened, black Ishmaelitish coffee in tiny cups. Their philosophy is that, "if the cup of life be bitter, why should the coffee be sweet?" Christmas in Syria is a holy day and not a holiday. We visit each other to wish good will; but no presents are given. There is no exchange of gifts, no lying awake at night to form Christmas lists, no racking of the brains to discover whether or not our gifts to a friend exceed in value the one received by us. We believe that the gift of the Saviour to the world is a great enough gift. New Year's Day —"Sabah-el-Khair"—meaning "Morning of Plenty," is the day on which gifts are given and received.

Following a bath or shave, should you meet a friend, whether on the street or in the home, it would be very impolite if you did not address him "naa emun"—"May you live in luxury." At a wedding, you will greet him with the most profuse and elaborate blessings, and wish that the person nearest you may be the next fortunate one. Should your nearest guest be a young, unmarried girl, she, like all Orientals, and even Americans, will blush modestly, turn her face away and sigh inaudibly, from the depths of her heart—"inshallah"—"May it soon come to pass." The true shepherd of the East never drives his sheep, but always leads them; so, whenever you see a portrait of a shepherd driving his flock, you may be sure the artist has never visited the Orient. Oriental women paint their nails with henna, while the Western sisters rouge their cheeks. The Westerner salutes with a hearty grip of the hand, while the Easterner uses the graceful

salaam of touching the head and breast. In America, we have only one Sabbath, while in Syria we have three—Friday is the Moslems', Saturday the Jews', and Sunday the Christians'.

In Palestine a meal is always completed with almonds, figs, dates or raisins, while in America it is invariably apple pie, plum pudding, or strawberry shortcake. A Syrian maid listens for the sound of her lover's footsteps, while a Western girl awaits the sound of his voice over the wire. A Syrian conceals a lock of his beloved's hair over his heart, while an American tenderly carries her vanity case and lipstick in his pocket. Addressing letters in the Orient is quite the reverse of the customary methods in America. The name of the city and the province is placed first at the top of the envelope in the right-hand corner, and the name of the person comes last. The stamp is affixed in the lower left-hand corner or on the back of the envelope. The Arabic language reads from right to left.

While travelling in Syria, if you inquire the distance from one place to another, and if it be not far, they will respond to you, not in terms of miles or hours, but by " sherbit cigarra," meaning " as long as it takes to smoke a cigarette." In America they tell their secrets over the telephone, but in Syria they proclaim them aloud from the housetops. An Eastern clock, as its pendulum swings to and fro, says, " Take time—take time," while the Western clock says, " get there—get there."

Telephone service in the East is in its first stages, and, as yet, very unsatisfactory. An operator must be able to speak many languages—Arabic, English,

French, Hebrew, German, Turkish and Greek; thereby causing much confusion. If you speak to her in Arabic, she may answer in French; or, if you speak in English, she may reply in Hebrew. Likewise, the postal service has not become established. Wishing to send an invitation to social affairs, weddings or feasts, no one thinks of relying upon the mail. Instead, as in the days of old, servants are sent to present them personally. You accept the courtesy of your hostess; and, when the day arrives, early in the morning, the servant appears with another note, reminding you of the day and your promise. An Oriental never sits down to or rises from a meal without washing his hands and offering a prayer.

While you make much of Christmas in America, we make more of Easter in Palestine. On Easter morning, a great mass of people throng the narrow streets leading to the Holy Sepulchre; and it is celebrated, not for a day, but for a whole week. People are gaily dressed; homes everywhere are decorated and opened to receive visitors. Easter has always been a time of festivities and rejoicing. Children look forward to it with great eagerness; weddings and feasts, accompanied by songs, dancing and chants of weird melodies are carried on for the entire week.

In meeting friends, instead of the usual salutation—"Salamon alicum"—"Peace be unto thee," you will greet each other with the words, "El Messeah Kaam"—"Christ is risen," and the reply comes back, "Hakan Kaam"—"He is risen, indeed." Strange as it may seem, with all its gaiety, yet there is an atmosphere of silentness and peacefulness about the land where the Master lived, that thrills the heart of man. The

fragrant roses and the sweet Palestinian lilies all seem to speak of the risen Lord.

Indeed, there is a marked contrast between the Orientals and the Occidentals. The Occidental always follows the set routine of his daily life, while an Oriental lives his life in a somewhat chaotic manner. Everyone has plenty of time in which to do nothing, for time is of no value to the Syrian. In America we live in the midst of a great rush, always in a hurry—hurry—hurry—hurry—hurry to eat, hurry to sleep, hurry in living and hurry in dying. In Palestine we take time, all the time there is; that is why we are so behind time. A shopkeeper in the city of Jerusalem was asked if he knew any English. "Ah, yes," he replied, "I know two sentences. One has a Christian soul, 'Business is business,' and the other has an Arab soul, 'Hurry is of the devil.'" The majority of my people still use the sun as the means of a clock. They rise when its first beams show over the mountains, and retire when its glow has faded into darkness. Again and again, we have been invited to feasts and banquets at a certain time, but, invariably, we never sit down to the table until three or four hours later. The customary courtesies and hospitalities must always be extended first, accompanied by songs and dances.

"It isn't good for the Christian's health
To hustle the Aryan brown,
For the Christian riles and the Aryan smiles
And it weareth the Christian down.
And the end of the fight is a tombstone white,
With the name of the late deceased
And an epitaph drear—'A fool lies here
Who tried to hustle the East.'"

In Damascus and Beirut, the only two cities in all Syria and Palestine that boast of tramways, the natives have, in a measure, caught the spirit of hurry, which is the more pronounced in a country where everything is bathed in congenial quiescence. The one of the three conductors gives you very little time to board a car, before he calls out, for they have no bells, " Yellah meshey,"—" Hurry, let's go." But, if two friends meet on the car, and one leaves before the other, they must stop to shake hands and extend the parting salutations, which are many, while the conductor impatiently calls out, " Yellah, yellah! "—" Hurry, hurry! "

But how different is life in the West! In hotel dining rooms and in cafés, I have watched men come in for luncheon, and it is always the same method—a soup spoon in one hand, a newspaper in the other, and his eyes upon the clock. One day I watched a Ford coupé crash into a Buick limousine. Quickly a large crowd gathered. In a few moments, the lady who was driving the coupé had extricated herself, pulled out her powder-puff, rouge and lipstick, rearranged her tresses, and, in the twinkling of an eye, had disappeared.

I sat down to prepare an address one day, in a downtown hotel of a leading city, where I had a corner room. Though thrilled and inspired with my theme, yet, I could accomplish nothing; for from every side came the banging of doors and the sound of elevators shooting up and down; and from the street below came the sound of the ceaseless, mad rush of autos, the nerve-racking whistle of motorcycles, harsh music through loud radio horns, jazz phonographs, traffic signal bells, street cars, all going at once. I paused and asked, " Oh, fast age of the twentieth century,

ease up thy pace!" My soul longed for the sound of the tinkling bells of the Arabian steeds, the soft, slow tread of the padded hoofs of the camels, the bray of the donkeys and the stillness of the burning sands at twilight, when they are bathed in purple grandeur. I cried aloud, " O Thou who maketh a plaything of time and watcheth centuries come and go, this pace of the West surely does not agree with the pace of the East."

Since the days of Solomon, proverbs have been used by my people in their daily conversation and to emphasize their discourses. Many of them have been handed down to us from mouth to mouth for ages. The following have been translated from the Arabic:

" Three there be that try the soul of man—money, power and misfortune."

" Be content and thou shalt be rich—be reliable and thou shalt have power."

" The house without the husband is like the morning without the dew."

" He that winketh his eye, causeth sorrow."

" When tongues begin to be busy with a woman's name, then it is time that they who have wings should go."

" Truly, he serves out water with a sieve who argues with one whose mind is made up."

" In time of trouble you will discover who are your friends."

" Three things give one a fever—a lazy messenger, a lamp that gives a poor light and a guest who is late for dinner."

" It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop than with a brawling woman in a wide house."

" He wanders who takes a blind man for a guide."

"Three there be that ease the heart from sorrow—water, green grass and a handsome face."

"There are no two but Allah makes the third."

"Every soul is monarch of his own body."

"The world is a wheel—one minute for you and the next against you."

"For four things there is no recall—a spoken word, the sped arrow, the act of a fool and time misspent."

"Silence is beauty and quiet is peace,
Speak not too often, there's nought to repent.
Break thou but rarely the seal of the lips,
Words left unspoken thou wilt never lament."

There was once a rug maker in the city of Damascus, Ali ibn Sahrab, noted for the beauty of his work. Many buyers came and waited for him, knowing that his rugs were good, while merchants in the market place despised the poor weaver, who had little to sell, though that was of the finest quality. Once, late at night, as he bent lovingly over his loom, these merchants came secretly to him and said, "Why dost thou waste so much time over each little rug, when you might make many and sell to us at a great profit?" And ibn Sahrab answered, with the wisdom of Solomon, "A good name is better than riches and service is above silver or gold."

It is just as impossible to give my readers the charm of the Arabic language as it would be to send our Eastern friends, in all their natural beauty and richness, the fruits and flowers of California; which, taken from their own atmosphere, lose the flavour and perfume which they hold in the place of their birth.

VIII

WHERE CUSTOMS AND IDEALS REMAIN UNCHANGED

IN no other land, perhaps, have manners and customs remained less changed than in the land of the Bible, rightly called "the Unchanging East." One feels that the old patriarchs have just folded their rugs and passed on around the bend in the road, and that they might return to this world, after a repose of almost four thousand years, and find hardly an essential change; manner of dress, articles of common use and modes of thought and expression are the same. The life of the Syrian farmer is as romantic as in Bible days, for he still employs the same old methods as did the men who tilled Abraham's fields—the oxen bearing the heavy yokes and tied to the rough wooden plows. To be sure, since the occupation of Syria by the present government, a few modern farming implements have been introduced into some parts of the country, but when one gets out of the beaten paths, the work is carried out in the same old manner.

The three grand events in a Syrian household are birth, betrothal and marriage—when all work is suspended and all, young and old, join in the celebrations and festivities. But possibly the most elaborate occasion is the wedding. To really appreciate with what eagerness and joy it is celebrated, we must accept the invitation to be one of the party. Since that wedding of Cana of Galilee, it has remained not merely a wed-

ding day, but a wedding festival. No invitation cards are sent; but friends of the bride and friends of the groom visit the homes in pairs. The ceremony, generally, lasts from ten days to two weeks; and, during this time, every kind of entertainment is provided for the guests by the father of the groom. Then takes place all sorts of chants, dancing, sword-playing and singing. Hundreds of guests arrive from miles around; all who wish may come to the feast.

When the young bride approaches the home of her husband, she is accompanied by attendants carrying large candles, richly painted and decorated, who conduct her to the seat beside the young man. The first commands given to the young couple by parents, relatives, friends and the priest are: "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth" (Genesis 1:28). "Marriage is honourable and sacred" (Hebrews 13:4). "Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands as unto the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22–23). The wedding gift from the groom to the bride is about forty dresses of every shade and colour of delicate silks. During the celebration, she will change her dress three times a day, so as to have appeared in the forty dresses which are to last her a lifetime.

Upon the arrival of the priest, the entire assembly subside into reverence. The High Priest, in his sacerdotal robes, with his attendants, approaches. In deep solemnity, the ceremony is performed: the blessing of the young couple; the joining of their little fingers, signifying unity; and the exchanging of the olive wreaths upon their heads three times, in the form of a cross—in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. The placing of the rings upon

their fingers denotes power, and dates from early Biblical times, when Pharaoh placed the ring upon Joseph's hand (Genesis 41 : 42).

The feast draws to a close, and the grandmother comes to give her parting benediction to the bride. " Now, beloved, your mother is stricken in this hour of thy departure and cannot summon words to discharge her last advice to you; hence, I have come in her place. Our daughter, you leave this sheltered home and neighbourhood, to go to a home as sheltered, but to go among neighbours and strangers, many of whom are of a different faith. Let not their life nor teachings influence you. Should your husband prove unwise, gird thyself with greater wisdom; should he prove untrue, remain thou steadfast to the principles of thy fathers and to the teachings of thy youth. And, should any ask, ' Who is thy father and thy mother,' designate thy husband's parents, and thereby win their love, as your noble mother, in like manner, has won our love. Farewell, my daughter. Go in peace."

During the wedding festivities, much of the time is devoted to songs and dances, of which my people are passionately fond. They may well be called the treasures of the natives, which have been inherited from our early ancestors. One of the most famous dances is the " el debka," an ancient Ishmaelitish dance, which dates back to the early centuries. To the accompaniment of songs and the beat of the timbrel, a group of young people stand in a circle and, with the graceful sway of the bodies, execute the exciting dance. The leader holds the timbrel, which he strikes first upon the knee and then shakes above his head, according to the rhythm of the music. The bodies sway, now to

right, now to left, and with the forward motion comes the stamp of the feet and the shouts of the leader—"Dah, Dah-Dah!" The group outside the circle clap to the beat of the music, and from time to time come the enthusiastic shouts of the onlookers. It is, truly, a religious step, and is, undoubtedly, the same that was practiced by the children of Israel when they danced about the Golden Calf.

Equally fascinating is the modest, haughty, dignified solo dance. It is a far different interpretation of joy than has been presented in the Western world as a Salome dance. It is not an easy step; for every motion of the body, the movements of the arms, the feet, the erect, proud carriage of the head, the graceful salaams, reveal weird glimpses of the hidden past. All the dreams of the Eastern life are embodied in it. Grace in posture, elegance of attitude and ease of movements are the chief objects of the dancer. These solo dances have played an unique part in every festive occasion; in religious worship, and at courts to divert the monarchs from sadness and melancholy, since the days of Abraham. It was so that "David danced before the Lord with all his might" when he brought up the ark of Jehovah from Kerjath-jearim to the city of David.

The ancient mourning customs among my people are closely adhered to. Death in a family is announced by chosen men from the housetops in a strange, indescribable, wailing cry. Women rush through the streets, their hair hanging loose, and with a prayer upon their lips; striking their breasts and tearing their garments. In my country, sorrow is an horrible affliction, and to those who mourn there is no comfort.

The great Philosopher struck the key-note in His Sermon on the Mount, when He said: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." When death occurs, friends and relatives of the family join in the lamentations for the departed, which generally last forty days. Each night prayers are recited by the priests. The whole neighbourhood refrains from any joyous occasions; singing and dancing are put aside. Even after a year has passed, the bells of the churches are tolled in solemn recognition of the dead.

At the house of mourning, professional women are hired to give their cry of lamentations. The unsweetened black cup of coffee is passed, and, upon drinking it, they say, "If the cup of life be bitter, why should the coffee be sweet?" Thus Naomi voiced the common expression of her people when she cried, "Call me not Naomi, (meaning 'blessed') but call me Mara (bitter) for my soul is bitter indeed and the hand of the Almighty has gone out against me."

From the days of Lot, when the two angels visited him at Sodom and "he pressed upon them greatly to enter into his house," the Syrians have been a most persistent race, never accepting "no" for an answer. When at a meal, they will urge you to accept another morsel and another, and, if you do not, they are deeply insulted. Dr. Cornelius V. A. Van Dyke, that far-visioned American educator who helped to make the American University of Beirut what it is to-day, told the following story of a trip he made from Beirut to Damascus. Passing a home at noon, he was invited to stop and dine. The host generously served him with the various dishes again and again, and each time would say, "For my sake, Dr. Van Dyke, eat a little

more," and he accepted. Often came the same request, until he became too ill to rise. "Leaving my good friends in the afternoon, I journeyed on," Dr. Van Dyke relates. "We soon passed a pool of clear water, and I dismounted to allow my donkey to drink. He drank his fill, and, according to Syrian custom, I said, 'For my sake, drink a little more,' but, in spite of my urging, he stubbornly refused. I then said, 'Well, at least you possess more sense than Dr. Van Dyke, for you know when you have had enough.'"

IX

WITHIN THE WALLS OF THE SYRIAN HOME

SYRIAN girls are taught, first of all, to become useful wives. A girl's education is not complete unless she has learned to sew, to wash, to cook, to mend, to be gentle, to dress neatly, to keep a secret,—to avoid idleness, to be self-reliant, to keep the house tidy, to make home happy, to control her temper, to take care of a baby, to sweep down cobwebs, often to marry a man for his wealth rather than for his worth, and, above all, to be a womanly woman under all circumstances. The crown of a Syrian maiden, and the one who is sought by highly esteemed young men, is the girl who walks slowly and gracefully with head erect, unmoved by any excitement around her; the girl who salutes with a faint smile, who avoids loud laughter, who is brave in time of sorrow, and who can bring forth the most elaborate lamentations at the time of mourning. As for vanity, she has but very little. A new dress is of the same style as the last one, or like her grandmother's. I am not referring to those who have adopted the dress of their Western sisters, with the tight, short skirts, no sleeves and low necks. The change is keenly felt and regretted by many of our Syrian leaders, for we must agree that the Syrian girl wearing her original costume with the long, Ishmaelitish flowing sleeves presented a nobler type of womanhood than those of to-day, who

wear so ungracefully the Parisian costumes. I feel my country will be impoverished, and no longer hold its former charm, when it loses its Orientalism.

Physically, Syrian girls develop much younger than the Western girls, which is, perhaps, the cause of early marriages, the usual age being from twelve to fifteen, so that a woman is often a grandmother when only a little over thirty years of age.

What is lacking in the various styles of dress, however, is made up in ornaments. From earliest childhood, gifts of rings, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and gems of every description are bestowed upon her by her immediate family and friends. These always remain her own property and are considered very sacred. Often, they are handed down from one generation to another and are reverenced for their tender associations. With what anxiety the woman in the parable, who lost the piece of silver, sought for it—not because of its own value, but rather because it was a priceless family treasure. In the wedding celebration, what amount of money she possesses, whether it be gold or silver, is placed on her head.

The question has often been asked me, "Do the Orientals really marry for love?" Yes, indeed, the Orientals do love, and are very lovable. Do we not read, "and Isaac loved Rebekah"? Or can we find a man of this twentieth century who would serve seven years for his bride as Jacob did for Rachel?—I was amused, following an address delivered before a woman's club, when a lady remarked, "It is one thing, nowadays, to get a man, and another thing to keep him."

Syrian girls never flirt, never walk along the

streets, arm in arm with a young man. They never meet, never embrace, never sit on the same divan, except in the presence of a member of the family. In other words, love and courtship follow the marriage.

After I had finished dramatizing some of my Biblical-Oriental stories, it was a very difficult task for me to play the part of a wife. From earliest years, we are carefully trained to avoid conversation pertaining to marriage or love affairs. If it so happens that a discussion concerning such matters is brought about in the presence of a girl, it is regarded the height of good manners for her to walk out. I recall an experience which took place during my first year in college in America, when I could not walk out. One evening I attended a reception at which a number of boys were present. The gathering was quite informal. Several games were played, and, while I had not yet acquired the English language so fluently, nor was I used to the strange Western customs, yet there was a certain fascination which made me enjoy every moment of the occasion, although I was greatly disturbed in my mind for fear that sooner or later they might call on me for a speech.

Before the happy hours were over, a young man, who was the moving spirit of the crowd, requested that each guest give some kind of a definition of love. I felt like crying, "Ah, woe is me!" with all sincerity. How must I, an Oriental, express my opinion of love in the presence of so many young men, was the task that confronted me at that moment. I wish you might have heard the shouting and the laughter, when my turn came and I replied, "Love is the pure juice of the heart squeezed out for a friend." After I had

spoken before a southern university, a young man, taking his girl home that night, declared that the Princess' definition was this: "Love is the pure juice of the heart squeezed out *by* a friend."—He rather Americanized it.

In the land of the prophets, divorces are practically unknown. This is due to the laws of the Mother Church and to our early training. A Syrian girl gives up all for her husband, content to trust and believe in him and to live a life of virtue for her family's sake. An acquaintance of mine, one of the foremost Arabic writers of to-day, has lived apart from her husband for over three years. The dignitaries of the Greek Orthodox church have tried in vain to bring them together. The case was brought to the patriarch, who flatly refused his sanction upon the question of a divorce.

A noted poet and vizier had died. He had been married according to the rites of the Maronite church, but, their married life having been one of discords and unrest, he desired to divorce his wife; but the Maronite church forbade such actions. So he set his face toward a town near Beirut, where he found a former priest of the Greek Orthodox church, but one who had been excommunicated. Here he met his ideal maiden, and, going to this priest, they were married according to the laws of the Orthodox church. Some time later he died. His friends went to the priest of the Maronite church and asked him to read the funeral service; but the priest refused, saying that he had left the Maronite church. Then they sought the bishop of the Orthodox church, but he refused, declaring that the man's name could not be found on the books of

the Greek church. At their wits' end, the relatives searched everywhere to find someone to perform the burial rites, but to no avail. So, while the bishops and the priests and the relatives argued, the body of the dead man remained in its burial robes until corruption had begun its work.

Some years ago, a young Syrian arrived in New York City. In a short time he had made a reputation for himself in the business world and had become a loyal citizen. Later, he decided to send for his wife in Syria. Upon her arrival, he met her, faultlessly attired in the latest fashion. But, when the sweet little wife, whom he had not seen for some years, approached him, coming from a land where styles do not change every six months, with her long tresses hanging over her shoulders instead of the marcelled bob that men love to touch, her loose but graceful costume instead of the short, tight skirt displaying her attractive ankles, and, above all, her natural simplicity; the modern young sheikh became quite indignant and very much ashamed of her. So he presented her with a purse of gold, purchased her ticket and sent her back to Syria. When questioned as to her departure, she cried bitterly, " Verily, my husband loved me once and I loved him, but now his eyes are opened. Would that I could find a hiding place. Alas, alas, what shall I tell my people? "

" Sons in the Orient build up a home, but daughters pull it down."—From the Arabic. Thus spake Jehovah unto Abraham, " As for Sarah—I will bless her and give thee a son also of her—and she shall be the mother of nations and kings of people shall be of her " (Genesis 17: 15–16). The son is an heir to

wealth, an heir to preserve the sacred name of the family and to perform the religious duties. Upon the birth of a son, there is great rejoicing. Feast after feast is held with songs and chants in honour of the child. Rich and precious gifts are laid at the feet of the babe, as, in like manner, they were presented to the Christ child. "Ye shall find the babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." This custom still prevails among my people. A new-born child is bathed in strong salt water for the first three days; then olive oil, mixed with a plant of the mint species, pounded fine like flour, is applied for the following three days. The using of the salt and olive oil, they declare, strengthens the body of the infant. The question has been raised by people who have come in contact with the Syrians, why the back of their heads have such a flat appearance. Indeed, it is not the lack of intelligence, but because the babe is put in swaddling clothes, with its arms fastened close to its body, and laid on its back, without being turned for the first six months.

The Orientals have a great love for children; the larger the family, the prouder the parents. If a woman be found barren, it is a disgrace, and they say of her, "She is cursed of the Lord." It is, therefore, an unhappy life that a wife must lead who cannot present a man-child to her house. She is continually talked about and provoked, as was Hannah (Samuel 1:6–16). They believe that large families are the most precious heritage of the Lord. Fourteen or fifteen children is not an uncommon occurrence.

Like mothers, the world over, each thinketh hers is the only child. This is somewhat similar to the story

told of the Egyptian princess, who while celebrating her birthday, gave to a negro slave a fine necklace, which she was to put around the neck of the prettiest boy in school. The slave resolved to do justice, carefully examined row after row of boys as they sat at the feet of "khatib"—teacher. They seemed to her pale and sickly; neither their teeth nor the whites of their eyes were prominent as they should be, and they had so little to characterize them that she really wondered how their parents knew them apart. With heartfelt conviction, she hung the dazzling necklace around the neck of her own child. Returning to the princess, she said, "I gave it to the only child there, whose skin was like the night, his teeth like ivory, and oh! his lips like the rose." "Ah, me!" exclaimed the princess, "So the monkey in the eyes of his own mother is a gazelle."

"The virtuous woman is the crown of her husband, the wise woman builds up her home and the righteous woman is an inheritance of the Lord."—*Sayings of Solomon,* from the Arabic. One becomes impressed with the truth of these sayings when you live in my country. The sanctity of women is held supreme; they owe their rank to the respect shown them by the men. They are not kept "in purdah" as the women of India are. Their elevation to be the friends and companions of men is due to the wisdom of the priesthood.

Among the best classes, women dress in the most elegant styles of silks and satins, embroidered in gold thread and pearls. They are exceedingly fond of jewelry of every kind, and wear numerous gold bracelets and necklaces, set with precious stones and work

of the finest filigree. They also take a personal interest in all their household arrangements, and, although they have many servants, they must oversee everything themselves. They employ much of their time in embroidering with threads of gold and silver in a most skillful manner.

The women of my native land are never idle. From the days of Solomon, she has looked well into the comforts of her household; she maketh fine linen and girdles and selleth them to the merchants, and stretcheth out her hand to the poor and the needy; she bringeth her food from afar and seeketh wool and flax, working it with her own hands; she buyeth a field and planteth her own vineyard; she weaveth and maketh her own clothing of silk and purple, working far into the night by the light of her own oil flare; she openeth her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue is the law of kindness. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her; her children rise up and call her blessed and her husband sits at the gates, among the elders of the land, and praises her.

X

THE ROMANCE OF THE HOUSE OF HAIDAR

THE romance of the House of Haidar begins in the early centuries of history. The origin of the name Haidar, or Hadar (Haidar meaning Lion or Power), may be traced to Genesis 25, verses 13–16—"And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, according to their generations—Hadar, Tema and Kedemah.—These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names by their towns, by their castles and by their principalities, twelve princes according to their nation." But, be that as it may, our first accurate knowledge of the house comes in 85 B. C., when the Arab tribe of Beni-Ghassan, whose direct descendants we are, governed in and around Damascus and in the mountains of Hauran.

Down through the centuries, the gradual changes in the names and the separation of the old houses, according to ancient records, were caused by rivalries and jealousies, which later brought about vengeful feuds, lasting for generation after generation. "I and my brother against my cousin, and I and my cousin against my neighbour," runs the well-known Arabic proverb. The clannish character of the Syrian is an inherited trait and has both its advantages and disadvantages. While it preserves traditions and dignity, it also discourages adventure, and blocks the wheels of progress.

From remote antiquity, we have clung to the rever-

ence of ancestors, and we are taught from childhood that the name of the family must be honoured and upheld. We have invariably married and intermarried within ourselves, and a mésalliance is a rare thing, so that the records of the families are easily and accurately traceable. Although tossed from hand to hand, robbed and conquered by various invaders, oppressed by the Ottoman rule for hundreds of years, yet, this old house has never lost its identity, and to many of its members have been given the authority to govern, but subject to the reigning power.

To-day, throughout Syria, we have a number of houses who are the direct descendants of ancient royalty and who proudly trace their lineage back into remote antiquity, indeed, to Biblical era. Our genealogical records have been handed down from father to son through all the past centuries. Possibly that is why Syrian mothers desire and pray for the birth of sons; it is their hope of the future, for the less sons means the vanishing of the family name.

It is difficult for the Western world to understand fully the meaning of our titles, as we in the East know them. To be sure, the little country has no reigning sovereigns, nor has it had for hundreds and hundreds of years. Our titles mean honour, respect and reverence to our early forefathers, and though, through changing circumstances, a member of one of these houses should find himself in the very lowest depths of poverty, still his ancient heritage claims and receives respect and honour due him. Like the North American Indian who still rejoices in his royal ancestry, although subjected to the white man's rule, so the ancient houses of Syria still cling to their rights and ideals,

and it is for this that Syria is to-day the bright jewel in the Oriental crown.

In the days when the Ghassanides flourished, the kingdom split into sections, and each had its own prince. Some passed under the sway of Persia, and to-day we find their descendants, the House of Haidar, numbered among the ruling houses of Persia. A large portion of them accepted Islam, according to the localities where they settled, and we find branches of them in Turkey, Irak, Egypt and other parts of the Near East, but all tracing their origin to the tribe of Beni-Ghassan.

To substantiate the foregoing statements, I have translated the following, a very small portion of our genealogy, which I hold in my possession and which has been compiled and written by hand by my kinsman, one of the noted authors of the House of Farigey.

If we find it difficult to trace the origin of the Syrians, we must concede that the Maronites are the descendants of the Assyrians, the offspring of the ancient Chaldeans, the early inhabitants of Syria. The Greek Orthodox, known in Arabic as "rūm," trace their origin to the Beni-Ghassans. The Shiites came from the cities of Irak and Persia, while the Sunite Moslems, as well as the Christians and Jews who accepted the Moslem faith, came from the islands of Arabia. Hence, the ancient house of Abou Haidar is the progeny of the Arab tribe of Beni-Ghassan, who dwelt in and around Damascus and in the mountains of Hauran. The accurate proof of the above statements is shown in the following:

1. The positive records that have been preserved

by our forefathers of the House of Haidar in a direct line for hundreds and hundreds of years.

2. The certainty of the place from which they emigrated, the town of Sulkat, located in the heart of the Ghassanide kingdom.

3. From the writings of the learned Esau Alexander Malouf, Sheikh Ibraham el-Yazagi and George Bey Zaidan and other noted historians and men of authority.

A word is perhaps necessary here concerning the Arabs of Ghassan. According to the writings of the early Arab historians, the Ghassanides first dwelt in Tehema, one of the islands of Arabia, called Ghassan, from which they derived their name. Later, they inhabited the territory surrounding Damascus, where they established extensive kingdoms under the Roman Empire, and what is known to-day as the Balkat, or the regions beyond the Jordan, and Hauran. Bosra, of Damascus, became their capital, and there they builded their strongholds and fortresses. The Ghassanides were the builders of kingdoms, and, according to Issfahaney, the oldest Arabian dramatist, they were governed by thirty-two kings for over six hundred years, beginning in the second century before Christ.

They were the confederates of the "rūm" against the Persians. The most famous of all their kings was Harith, who reigned during the time of the Roman emperor, Justinian the Great. King Harith was a man of great valour and a great warrior, and his reign was one of wars and conquests. The length of his reign was forty years, and he attained the fame and esteem of the Romans, such as no man had ever won. The last of their kings was Hogar, the son of Nu'man,

who was on the throne in 613 A. D. During his time, the Arabs conquered Syria, and with his reign the kingdom of the Ghassanides passed into history. But when the Roman emperor expressed a desire for the restoration of Syria, Jabal ibn Aiham arose from among the Ghassanides and joined with Omar and accepted Islam. The Ghassanide sway extended to Petra, Hauran, Damascus, Tadmor and Baalbek, and their power spread over all the Arabian territories. However, to Monsieur Doceau, the French excavator, must be given the credit for finding these traditions of the Ghassanides.

XI

BORN TO THE PURPLE

IN the beginning, the house of our fathers emigrated from the town of Sulkat, still a very prosperous city. From there, the line of emigration led to Mezela, in the province of Jabile, one of the districts of Lebanon. This was in the early part of the seventeenth century. In the middle of the same century, they went to Biskinta, in the heart of the Lebanon, for the purpose of using the natural mountain fortresses as a protection from their enemies, and to forget the jealousies and feuds of early days. We have been unable to ascertain the real cause of the early hostilities, but they were probably due to the rivalry and disagreements among the brothers of the house.

Our forefather, Sahadi Abou Haidar, with his brother, Abdul Messeah, emigrated from Sulkat. Abdul Messeah had two children, Ayoub and Traad; and Sahadi had four sons, Haidar, Farigey, Shalhoub and Shaheen (surnamed Abou Kemal). All the others, however, retained the name of Abou Haidar. Later, because of selfish motives and jealousy, Farigey withdrew from the House of Abou Haidar and became the head of his own house—Farigey—it was a great sin for one brother to withdraw from another. But the tie of blood has forever remained firmly rooted.

The House of Haidar then chose for their protec-

tion and place of abode, Biskinta; remaining there until the close of the eighteenth century, when some members emigrated to Baalbek and the surrounding districts. It is a well known fact that the men who came from this house and who had the opportunity, possess the brilliant mentality, keen intelligence and great power to place them among the outstanding men of the world.

Sheikh Ibraham Saeed Abou Haidar was born in Talia, Baalbek, in 1835 and died in 1915. He came into prominence in all governmental affairs, both in the tribunal and as a governor. Self-reliance, fearlessness, immobility, characterized him. His talents, virtues and great experience in governing gave the people unlimited confidence in him.

Milhim Bey Ibraham Saeed Abou Haidar, son of Sheikh Ibraham, was born in Talia, Baalbek, in 1865. He received his early education at home, and later took up the study of law. He was appointed governor of Baalbek, under Turkish régime, which position he held until recently, when he was appointed governor over a still larger territory by the French, holding an office of trust and honour. Like his ancestors, for generations, he is an eminent man and shares the confidence of the rulers of Syria. His son, Ibraham Bey, was appointed governor of the district of Homs in 1927, by the French, and is the youngest ruler in the land.

Sheikh Saeed Ibraham Abou Haidar, son of Sheikh Ibraham, was born in 1870, and died in 1920; and was considered a most brilliant leader in education. He had in his possession a marvellous library, where he spent many of his idle hours. His gift of eloquence won for him many admirers; yet, with his deep sense

and keen knowledge of social affairs, politics and philosophy, he lived quietly upon his father's estate, never mingling in governmental questions.

Ragi Bey Abou Haidar, son of Yusuf Ibraham, was born in Biskinta in 1873. His early education was received at home, and later he studied law under the famous scholar, Tounus Bey Abou Nadiir. He rose rapidly into prominence, and at the age of twenty-three governed the province of El-Mootin. He also represented the Greek Orthodox church for seven years. Then he became the head of the territory of the El-Koora, remaining in this position for thirteen years. He then was appointed general judge of the Appellate Court of Lebanon, following which he was head of the Court of Justice of Beirut. Later he filled the office of Prosecutor of the Court of Appeals for the entire Lebanon; and to-day holds the enviable office of Counseiller a la Cour de Cassation of Grand Liban. During his public career, he has won the love and respect of all with whom he has come in personal contact. He has held governmental offices for more than thirty years, without a single intercession. He is upheld by his many virtues and is revered for his integrity, wisdom, keen tact, and rank, as well as for his great learning and wealth, which have placed him among the famous men of the East.

Lord Diab Saeed Abou Haidar was born in Biskinta in 1878, and, as a young man, emigrated to Brazil, where he purchased large estates of coffee, rice and cotton; and, in a few years, the name and fame of Lord Diab had spread throughout the South American continent, and he became the John D. Rockefeller of the Syrians. Never is there a request brought before

him, either by his own people or by the people of Brazil, that is ignored. He is continually doing good, but always in the name of his native country and his countrymen, and never for his own glory. His ranches now comprise some million and a half acres, and upon them he has built large factories, seven for coffee, four for rice, and three for cotton; employing thousands of men, for whom he has erected comfortable homes and to whom he has given every convenience. He maintains his own banks and publishes several newspapers and magazines. He ships his coffee into all parts of the world, with an output estimated at 50,000 sacks, of 125 pounds, per annum. He is honoured and loved by all; and, with his financial success, he always finds time to devote to his books and to the enforcing of laws for the betterment of his adopted country. He has two sons, Michel Bey and Adeeb Bey.

Michel Bey was born in September, 1904, in Brazil, and is a young man with a promising future. He has inherited from his ancestors his keen intellect and his love of learning. For the past three years, he has resided in Beirut; and recently was host at the most brilliant banquet ever known in that city, costing approximately three thousand Syrian pounds, and honouring two hundred and fifty men, who represented the governments of France, Irak and Brazil, and who were composed of princes, consuls, poets, authors, generals and prominent historians. On this occasion, he presented to the Brazilian Consul at Beirut, a magnificent hand-woven coat-of-arms, worked in Lebanon and costing five hundred dollars, a gift from Lebanon to Brazil. It has been sent by the Consul to the national museum at Brazil.

The pages of this book are too limited for a complete survey of the numerous men and women of the House of Abou Haidar and the House of Farigey, who, in the various walks of life, have achieved fame and prominence, and whose noble deeds have been recorded on the tablets of history.

Thus spake one of our great Arab poets:

"Mighty and honourable is he who bears the name of Haidar,
That eminent house, which is the source of all generosity."

XII

LEBANON, THE PRICELESS TREASURE OF SYRIA

LEBANON is a Hebrew word meaning " white," and derives its name from the snow that crowns the mountains the year round. The Assyrians called it Libano, the Romans Libanus, and the Syrians Lebanon. According to Holy Writ, Lebanon was included in the Land of Promise (Deut. 1:7–9 and Joshua 13:5–6). The original Lebanon is composed of two mountain chains on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, reaching from the north to the extreme south. One is called Lebanon, and the other, Anti-Lebanon, covering a space of three thousand square kilometers. The altitude varies widely, thereby offering every kind of climatic condition, which scientists declare are the most perfect in the world.

It is one of the most beautiful spots on earth, and has been uniquely marked out by nature until it has become one of the favourite paradises of the world. It is noted for its clear atmosphere and its pure, invigorating air. The numerous streams that abound in the mountains are the treasures of the country. The water is always ice-cold; and, after a careful chemical analysis, was found to contain quantities of carbonates, iron, sulphur, salt and magnesia. On every hand, one finds cold springs piercing their way between the huge limestone rocks, and sending their sparkling waters down into the valleys below. Indeed, without

Lebanon there would be no Damascus, no Baalbek, no Sidon, no Beirut and no fertile land with its marvellous productions of olive, orange, and silk industries. With what pride a native will tell you he hails from Lēbanon! And, though he may wander far, his heart always remains in his beloved "Jebel" (mountain).

The famous Arabian poet well expressed it when he said: "Lebanon bears winter upon his head, spring upon his shoulders, and autumn in his bosom, while summer lies sleeping at his feet."

He stands like a white-haired poet, with the plains, the valleys and the rivers as his audience, listening spellbound to his sublime utterances of the past; while the Great Sea, always carrying its secrets in its depths, dashes its waves against his feet and sends the spray up into his face. But Lebanon, indignant at the interruption, repulses the waves and sends them back torn in shreads.

To those who have visited here, not only for a few days, but have taken time to delve into its history, glories and antiquities, there is always that irresistible call of those snow-crowned mountains; and you return again and again to live anew amid their invigorating atmosphere. You revel in the glory of sunshine, unknown in other lands. The sun rises and sets in a sea of golden radiance, and the moon sails across the starry heavens with an unknown brilliancy. You rise in the splendour of the dawn of a spring morning, and your gaze wanders over the fascinating scenery. You inhale the subtle perfume of wild flowers which pervades the air as you follow along one of the numerous streams and drink of its delicious water, and listen to the warbling of innumerable birds. But the prospect

is the most sublime, as I have stood upon the crags at the hour of sunset, when the purple mists float over the hilltops and the horizon is tinged with those effulgent colours of gold, rose and blue. Then, you pause and ask yourself if there can be another spot upon this universe that can equal the grandeur of Lebanon. At once your memory calls up Switzerland; while its scenery is akin, yet there is a vast difference—a difference in manners, modes of living, and customs of the two peoples.

Were it not for the neglect of my people, an insurmountable wall might be built around Lebanon, that would cut it off from intercourse with the world; yet it would subsist and grow and thrive upon its own productions. If the natives would govern their own industries, without dictation from Europe—their agriculture, their silk and cotton industries, their manufactures and arts, their orange, grape and olive productions—then their income would increase and their expenses decrease. They would be able to meet the demands and needs of the people, and those who have emigrated to distant shores would return to live in happiness and prosperity. They would not be obliged to wear the cast-off clothing of others, but would once again wear the kingly Tyrean purple garments of our ancestors.

But Lebanon is not only a sublime picture. It is the key to the treasures of the earth; for it contains wealth untold, not only in various kinds of ore, but in treasures of bygone days, that are constantly being unearthed, and telling of ancient people. Everywhere are being brought to light relics and remnants of early tombs and temples, especially throughout Phœnicia.

In 1922, M. Mantell, in Jebile, accidentally came upon an Egyptian temple, with the golden image of a god whose feet were like the paws of a lion, standing upon a chair. Penetrating further, he discovered a Phœnician temple, containing marvellous relics—large pottery jars filled with precious stones, pearls, amulets, and a large quantity of bronze. On the south of the old Crusader's castle, he also found the ruins of a temple, dating back to the early days of Rome.

In October and November of 1923, M. Monté, a Frenchman engaged in research work, found a deep well, and to one side of it a subterranean passage, containing a number of Egyptian sarcophagi and nine tombs. These were opened in the presence of the French High Commissioner, M. Wegand, and in one was found gold, silver and precious Egyptian relics with inscriptions showing that they had been sent by the Pharaoh of Egypt to the king of Jebile. Opening the second tomb, belonging to a king, they discovered several swords, coats of armour, the finest porcelain wares inlaid with jewels, and a gorgeous box of the most intricate pattern, and made exceedingly strong, which was probably used to preserve valuable things; for the inside revealed an immense wealth in rings, bracelets, necklaces, and earrings, all of purest gold. The value of the contents was estimated sufficient to pay off the war debt of France. He also opened another sarcophagus, belonging to the king of Jebile who reigned in the seventeenth century, B. C. Upon it was written his name in Egyptian hieroglyphics, and containing costly presents sent to him from the Pharaoh of Egypt. These are now in the museum at Beirut.

The present government of the little land has placed a guard of soldiers about this mysterious spot; and no one is permitted to approach it. To-day, around this district, have been unearthed columns delicately carved, and tombs and ruins of temples, whose origin has never been definitely determined.

Two years ago, a " fellah," near Sidon, while plowing, came upon a slab of stone, and every time he passed over it it would sway up and down. Calling to his neighbours, they removed the stone with great difficulty, and found an underground passage, containing a tomb with an elaborately decorated sarcophagus, in which was the body of a young man apparently twenty-five years old, in a state of perfect preservation. The body had been embalmed—not after the manner of the Egyptians, however; but was lying in a fluid, and gave the appearance of one peacefully sleeping. Even the colour of his hair and moustache had remained perfect. The buttons and decorations on his clothing were of gold, and on his fingers were numerous rings. His swords and all the luxuries of life surrounded him. The water had evaporated the tiniest bit, so that the tips of his toes looked like ashes. Upon the top of the sarcophagus was written in Phœnician his name; the son of a king, and a curse upon the one who should disturb and molest his sleep.

On the way from Tripoli to the Cedars of Lebanon, high up on the side of the mountain, stands an old castle. At once your mind attempts to fathom the meaning of it, for, as you look you can observe no possible way of access. Yet, there are the windows, the turrets and the huge arched door. Of a truth, a sense of the mysterious hovers about it, which is con-

firmed by the story that this was at one time a fortress and stronghold of a band of robbers, who, to avoid suspicion, had skillfully carved this castle out of the solid rock of the hillside—as a convent, whose occupants had all masqueraded as nuns.

Here they halted the passer-by and invited him in to see the convent and the beautiful art work that was done by the sisters. But those who entered never returned. They were seized and robbed the moment the heavy iron gate swung to, and their bodies were cast down into a deep well in the center of the enclosure.

One day a woman with her baby was hastening along the highway. As she passed the castle, she was invited to stop and see the lovely things that were made inside. Deceived by their shrewd and clever manner, she readily consented; but the moment she had crossed the threshold, she was set upon and robbed of all her possessions. As the hours passed slowly by, and they showed no signs of releasing her, she began to ponder on some means of escape. Using the baby as an instrument, she began pinching its little body, until it cried aloud in pain. She continued until the head of the convent, annoyed by the incessant cries of the child, asked her to take the baby outside and walk with it. Once out from those terrible walls, she hastened on through the dense woods and underbrush which surrounded the place until she was found by farmers. When she had told them the dreadful story of her robbery and what she had seen within the convent, they gathered together the men of the mountains and attacked the castle, killing or taking prisoners the inmates.

XIII

THE MATCHLESS CEDARS OF ALLAH

TO the north of the little village of Becharreh, at the height of 6,150 feet, set like an austere crown, is the largest grove of the remaining cedars, for which Lebanon has been famous since the days of Solomon, numbering some four hundred and fifty trees. It is in the possession of the Maronites, who have built a simple wall around it, and a chapel in the midst near the greatest of all the trees, which measures some thirty meters in height and fifteen meters in circumference.

What illustrious names one finds carved upon these sacred trees! I noticed on the trunk of one of them "Julia Lamartine," daughter of the celebrated French poet, who visited the grove in 1832.

My people hold these trees in great veneration; and since time immemorial, they have been considered sacred, and are known as the Cedars of Allah. Beneath their spreading branches, once a year, is celebrated a great holiday, at the Feast of the Transfiguration. Our traditions forbid the use of the cedars in any way, either for building purposes or for firewood. They firmly assert that if a structure were attempted from the precious trees, it would be destroyed in the building; and if they were used for firewood, the flames would leap up and consume the truant.

The approach to the Cedars from Becharreh, a dis-

Cedars of Lebanon, Relics of Former Generations.

tance requiring two and one-half hours to make, is, perhaps, one of the most hazardous in all Lebanon, and very few ever reach the grove, but are content to view it only from a distance. The perilous trip is made on horseback or on foot. In some places the path is scarcely wide enough for the horse to place its feet. Just two hours previous to our ascent, a rider and his horse had gone over the steep precipice. You can imagine my feelings when my attendant pointed out to me their lifeless forms lying at the bottom of the canyon, three thousand feet below. Here, I can assure you, I hastily dismounted, and continued the rest of the way on foot. A new road is rapidly nearing completion, which will overcome much of this great danger.

But, when you have rounded the last bend in the rocky way, and see nestled against the gray of the mountainside these silent sentinels of the past, the perils of the trip are thrust aside, and you revel in these mighty trees that have defied all centuries of time.

As I stood beneath the shadow of the matchless Cedars of Allah, tremendous reminders of former worlds, I longed for my Western friends, that they might behold with their own eyes these giant cedars, which I can only inadequately describe. Here, the hand of Nature has woven, like a garment, this forest to clothe this beauteous spot of Lebanon. A sense of calmness swept over me, for silentness is manifested everywhere. Here beauty and peace assume an almost human form, and you feel you have but to stretch forth your hand to touch them; here, in the presence of these supreme trees, man's soul undergoes a change;

here, amidst this peaceful quietness, his every care and anxiety vanishes—it is a retreat where one can sink down and forget.

This delightful sensation and the deep charm of the retreat must be experienced to be fully appreciated; for only here can luxury, grandeur and sublime enchantment be obtained. Yes, here, truly, is the Paradise of the world. Alone, beneath the overhanging branches of these lofty trees, I felt their magic power, and they bewitched me—yea, even as they bewitched and fascinated mighty men of former generations.

Strangers from the remote corners of the universe have visited you, ye Cedars of Allah, each entering your sanctuary with different emotions, but, in the end, you have beguiled them. Some came with pencil and brush to paint you; some only to gaze upon your greatness; some to complete their joys or to ease their pains; some to be released from cares or to regain their health through your invigorating atmosphere; but the majority have come in reverence and adoration to worship Him, the Creator.

Thou everlasting and silent forest—silent, though speaking many languages, what hidden meaning is concealed within your depths, what rapturous praises the birds of the air sing unto thee, and what mighty tales your falling leaves relate! Thou, the glory of nature, who dost enchant and captivate the hearts of old sheikhs and of youths, thy language is indeed the mother of languages. But these multitudes who have visited you—have they understood it? Nay, for verily, to you came the philosopher, the poet, the learned, the great and the small, the prince, the servant, the author, the wise and the foolish; each interpreting

you according to his own sentiments. You have listened, and understood them all.

O sublime forest, with branches and roots intertwined; with these vast throngs, representing every clime and every religion, resting in your peacefulness; teach us the meaning of unity; teach us the love of solitude; teach us the meaning of true life! Thou Cedars of Allah, standing guard over Lebanon these many generations, untouched by the hand of vandalism or by the trend of modern civilization, may you always remain, an immortal message from God, and the sublime relics of the early ages!

XIV

BAALBEK, THE CITY OF THE GODS

BAALBEK is a Phœnician name, composed of two words, Baal and Bekaa—meaning the "Seat of Baal" or "The City of the Sun," which name it still retains to the present day. The name was changed to Heliopolis in the time of the Greeks, and was retained by the Romans, but the Semitic form, Baalbek, has outlived both the Greeks and the Romans. It is perhaps one of the most interesting cities in all Syria, lying in a lofty valley surrounded by snow-covered mountains, at the opening of a small valley into the Plain El-Bekaa, formerly called Cœle-Syria, or "Hollow Syria," with an altitude of 3,800 feet.

The origin of Baalbek is unknown, but, according to traditions, which are varied and many, it dates from time immemorial. Our Arabic manuscripts say that "the country in and around it was inhabited by Abraham, and the town was built by Cain, when flying from the wrath of Jehovah, who peopled it with giants. After the flood, Nimrod sent giants to rebuild the fortress of Baalbek, and here he built his tower of Babel." Moslem tradition has it that Abraham reigned in Damascus, but lived in Baalbek. The Christians declare that Solomon built a superb castle at Baalbek and presented it as a wedding gift to the Queen of Sheba.

Ras-el-ain, or the Source of the Spring.

But, be that as it may, history reveals to us that in the time of Solomon, Baalbek held an advantageous position on the high road of commerce between Palmyra (Tadmor), Tyre and the farther East, two great caravan routes meeting here. It was a city of some size, completely walled, its walls being two and one-half miles in extent, enriched with stately palaces and adorned with monuments, abounding in trees and fountains and whatever contributed to luxurious enjoyment.

After the reign of Solomon, the country passed under the sway of the Phœnicians, and they, apparently, used all their skill and art in beautifying the temple of Baal. The city soon became famous for the worship of Baal and for the gorgeousness of the interiors of the temples. The early Syrians worshiped the sun, for to them it was the symbol of the Trinity of Deity—Truth, Light and Life. But in spite of all research, the origin of the city remains a mystery, but, like many another Syrian town, it must date back to a very remote period.

Following the Grecian conquest, nothing is heard of Baalbek, but that its name was changed to Heliopolis —"The City of the Sun." When the Romans conquered the country in 47 A. D., they left the name of Heliopolis unchanged, and here Julius Cæsar erected temples to the Roman god, Jupiter, and also to Venus. The worship of Venus became so popular with the people of Baalbek that parents consecrated their daughters to the goddess. However, during the reigns of Constantine and Theodosius the Great, all worship of the pagan gods was abolished. One of Constantine's first acts was to close the Temple of Jupiter and forbid the rites of Venus. It was not until the

time of Theodosius the Great, however, that Christianity was permanently established. He destroyed all the temples and built a Christian church on the site of the temple of Jupiter.

The city was claimed by Syria, Shem (Damascus) and Egypt together, and among them it was sacked in 798 A. D. Jenghiz Khan took it in 1134, and Saladin in 1175. The Crusaders attacked it under Raymond, but were repulsed by Saladin. Then came the Tartars, in 1260, under Helagu, and again, under Tamarlane, in 1400, and in the sixteenth century it fell under the sway of the Ottoman Empire. Under the various powers, the poor city fell into ruins, in which numerous floods and earthquakes helped.

Baalbek, my native city, I found the same as I left it; the narrow, winding streets, the houses tumbling together overhead, the tiny shops, protected from the glare of the Syrian sun by camel hair rugs, the peasant lad droning his weird songs, the Ishmaelites leading their camels, and upon them perched the little brown children; yes, the same quaint atmosphere of former days pervading all. And, after my years of public life upon the American lecture platform, it seemed to me like an oasis in the desert, where I could drop down and think and listen, and, little by little, feel that same deep charm of the Orient break over me.

The present population of the town is five thousand, composed mostly of Metawalis and Moslems. It boasts of six schools, three churches and several splendid hotels. The homes are humble in appearance, with the Christian quarters kept exceedingly clean. Orchards of figs and apricots, and vineyards of the most luscious grapes surround it. One of its beauty spots,

and one which serves as its popular resort, is Ras-el-Ain. Here the natives gather, day after day, in the cool shade of the numerous trees, and here at night men gather and, over their coffee and favourite pipe, listen to songs and recitation of Arabic prose and poetry. Near Ras-el-Ain, meaning "Source of the Spring," are the ruins of a mosque built in 1270.

I came back to Baalbek, after my long absence in the United States, with feelings of emotion that were hard to define, for, from time to time, had come to me strange stories of her change. But on the day of my arrival, as I beheld those majestic ruins greeting me, I was more than reassured. One can never know how exquisite gold can look against blue until you behold as I did, on that afternoon, the rays of the setting sun, slowly sinking behind Lebanon, casting its beams upon the six remaining columns of the temple of Jupiter. The whole became a mass of glittering gold dust, and those wonders seemed to tower ever higher as I gazed. When a child, as I played among those fallen stones, my imagination was stirred, but, in the hush of the eventide, as I returned to them, I felt their supreme calm, as they lifted their massive outlines into the clear skies, still holding their sublime secrets.

The welcome accorded me by my family upon my arrival was one befitting a lost daughter lately returned, as feast after feast was spread before me, at which were present many of the church dignitaries of the Mother Church, and prominent officials of Lebanon. They crowded about me, and their questions concerning America and the Americans flew fast; for my people look upon this vast country as the leading nation of the world, and, although thousands of miles

separate the two, it is surprising how unlimited is the knowledge they possess regarding it.

The ruins of Baalbek stand in the western end of the town, and for many years have attracted artists, architects and archæologists from all over the world. They look as though they had been fashioned by the hands of gods rather than by humans. These ruins date from the time of Antoninus Pius and Septimus Severus, whose coins first show the two Greek temples. The great courts were finished in the time of Caracalla. Nothing can exceed the exquisite taste which marks these awe-inspiring remains of antiquity, and one's mind cannot conceive how magnificent these stupendous structures must have looked in all their former completeness. Although time has thrown a mantle of decay over the whole area, yet those prostrate and broken capitals and cornices, lying together in a tumbled mass of confusion, are like "a song in stone to Strength." Indeed, the builders, whoever they might have been, seemed determined to rob the heavens of their celestial architecture, and who chose for their temples the one spot in all their land that was the most fitting for a shrine.

The history of the City of the Sun, from its creation to the present time, is one that is mingled with magnificence of wealth, wars, earthquakes and floods; and, through vandalism and ignorance, these once famed temples, whose glory rang throughout the world, have fallen into desolation and decay. Maupassant has said that of all the arts architecture is the most mysterious and the most nourished by ideas. One admits this truth as he contemplates these vast ruins—mysterious monuments of a former world.

I feel sorry for the tourist who has only a few hours to give to Baalbek, and beholds only a mass of dishevelled ruins. Alas, one can never feel the deep subtlety and sense of the mystic that pervades the place, in one day's time. One must return again and again, and become for the time a child of the Sun.

XV

SILENT WITNESSES OF THE MIGHTY PAST

THE ruins are now in the hands of the French, who extract fifty piasters from each person who enters. The approach to the entire temple area is by the Proplæ. In front of the buildings may be seen the bases of twelve columns, which in their original state were of Aswan granite of Egypt, polished to the highest degree. They were sent by the way of the Nile and the Sea to Tripoli, Syria, and thence to Baalbek over a special Roman route, hauled by oxen. Authorities on research have traced this route by fragments of the granite found in and around Tripoli. During the tenth century, these columns were taken by the Arabs, and used in building their mosques, and to-day we find portions of them in St. Sophia at Constantinople.

The entire temple area covers fourteen acres, and is twelve hundred feet from the Proplæ to the extreme end of the Temple of Jupiter. It is one hundred, ninety feet in the foreground and rear, and four hundred feet in the center. The buildings were entirely Roman, but the architecture was purely Grecian.

Coming from the Proplæ, we enter the hexagonal court. This is unique in its form, having six angles and four rectangular chapels, in front of which were four granite columns. Twenty-four feet from them was a hectangular stairway in three marches, over which stood thirty columns, each having a head of a

Within the Grand Court of the Altar, Where I Played as a Child.

lion with open mouth, to deposit the water from the roof. The roof was made from the famous cedars of Lebanon. The court, itself, was uncovered. This temple contained numerous rooms for the priests, who made their abodes there. From these rooms they came forth, dressed in their sacerdotal robes of gold and silver, playing upon harps and lyres, executing their religious dances through the courts to the Altar Temple to perform their ablutions before offering sacrifices.

We next enter the great court of the altar. It was in the center of this court that Theodosius the Great, after destroying the Temple of Jupiter, used the stones therefrom to erect the Basilica to the height of the Columns of Jupiter, for the sole purpose of abolishing paganism. This court is all on the same level. On either side of the altar of sacrifice are the basins of ablution and purification, delicately carved with sculptures representing cupids hunting and the heads of calfs encircled with garlands. When the Arabs entered the city, they changed it into a fortress, and destroyed all signs of its having been originally a place of worship; building baths in the right-hand corner and dwelling places in the left-hand side of the Basilica. They covered the ground with mosaic and erected ornamental basins in the court.

It might be of interest to my readers to know that in this same old church, on December 25, 1918, the Australian troops held a Christian service, with three thousand Australians and two thousand people of Baalbek uniting. The steps leading to the Temple of Jupiter were used for the choir of fifty voices, while the ancient altar of sacrifice served as the pulpit; where, centuries ago, the blood of countless victims

flowed in streams to the pavement below. This was considered a great event in the history of Baalbek, for, after hundreds of years of Mohammedan occupation, this old church resounded with Christian hymns and praise.

Ascending the broad flight of steps, we find ourselves in the grand Temple of Jupiter. It was originally built on a higher level than the rest of the buildings in the temple area, and some sixty feet above the level of the town. It is three hundred feet in length and one hundred and seventy feet wide, and was formerly enclosed by fifty-four columns—seventeen on each side and ten each in the front and rear, of which six only now remain standing. One cannot but admire the masonry of Baalbek, for mortar is nowhere used; the huge limestone rocks are joined together by lead, which has all been extracted by the Arabs. So perfect is the workmanship, the joints so well fitted together, that it is impossible to insert even the thinnest sheet of paper between any two stones.

Each of the columns is composed of three huge blocks, placed on a base and surmounted by a capital, distinctly Corinthian in style, with the intricate frieze and cornice. The ornamentations of the walls of this shrine are decayed, but some of the friezes are as sharp in outline, now, after more than twenty centuries have passed over them, as if they were just fresh from the hand of the cunning sculptor. The Temple of Jupiter has suffered more from the ravages of the invader than any other. It first began to suffer when Theodosius destroyed it to construct the Basilica. Then the Arabs followed in his footsteps, and the Turks completed its ruin. One pascha it is said blew

up a part of it to secure a few piasters worth of lead from among its stones.

The temple is surrounded on three sides by a huge wall of enormous blocks of stone; in the northern and southern walls are nine stones, while in the western wall are only six. Above these are three stones, each weighing fifteen hundred tons. They are sixty-three feet long, fourteen feet high, and thirteen feet deep, the entire length being one hundred and ninety feet. They were taken from the Baalbek quarry, less than a mile from the temple area, and, were they polished, would produce a beautiful yellow granite. These are the largest stones in any building in the world, but the uncut stone lying in the quarry is even larger and is known as " the stone of the Pregnant Woman." It lies in an inclined position, shaped and dressed, but still connected at one end with the native rock to which it belongs.

At the western end of the Temple of Jupiter, the Arabs erected a watch tower, called the Tower of the Chiefs. From its elevation is to be seen one of the most fascinating scenes in all Syria—the fertile plain of Cœle-Syria, the Roman catacombs and the snow-crowned Mount Lebanon, towering majestically into the blue sky.

To the south of the Temple of Jupiter is a smaller temple, the best preserved of all the ruins, and is without doubt the temple erected and dedicated to Bacchus. It is one hundred and fifteen feet long and sixty-eight feet wide, and was surrounded by forty-two columns—fifteen on each long side and six on each short side. The northern front is the best preserved, with nine of its fifteen columns standing, while on

the western side are only three. On the southern side is a column leaning against the cella, which was felled in the earthquake of 1759 but which still remains perfectly intact.

The Temple of Bacchus was a temple of wine and dancing. It was built on a lower level, and was a concession to itself. From this temple was an underground passage leading to the Temple of Venus, where the nude woman was worshiped. The Pronaos of the Temple of Bacchus was paved with gorgeous mosaics, and here their dances were executed before presenting libations to the God of Wine. The door leading to the interior of the temple at once catches the eye, a perfect specimen of architecture, forty-three feet high and twenty-one feet wide. The sides are composed of elaborately carved rocks representing flowers, fruits, wheat, poppies (the emblem of life and death), vines, and cupids carrying bunches of grapes. The work is so skillfully wrought that even the finest veins in the leaves are clearly visible. The Mohammedans assert that the forbidden fruit of the garden was not the apple, but wheat; and, of a truth, in gazing upon these superb sculpturings in the Temple of Bacchus, one might remember that tradition, and let the wheat stand for life in all its fullness.

The lintel of the door is composed of three large blocks of stone, the center one forming the keystone. It fell in the earthquake, but was partially replaced by the German mission, at the cost of three hundred Egyptian pounds. Taking this as a basis, it would require three thousand Egyptian pounds to raise it from the ground up to its present position, and thirty thousand pounds to bring it from the quarry; thereby prov-

The Six Remaining Columns of the Temple of Jupiter, Showing the Temple of Bacchus and the Christian Quarter of Baalbek.

ing that in a matter of this kind money would be of no importance; that a structure like this could have only been erected by hard labour and slavery.

At a distance of five hundred feet from the Temple of Bacchus stands a smaller temple—the Temple of Venus, well preserved and of the most elegant shape. This was used as a Christian church, and was dedicated to Saint Barbara, and is still called by the natives—El Barbara. In the interior may still be seen the Greek cross and a motto of Constantine's.

But one grows so weary of figures relating to these vast temples. We can never realize what they meant for the builders; indeed, human life must have been cheap; these blocks are cemented by the blood of countless slaves. But, throughout all the changes of time, these temples have preserved their secrets, unmoved by the admiration of mankind; and the visitor who wishes to catch rightly and understand these treasures of romance must, first of all, become temporarily a worshiper of the sun.

The people of Baalbek are very strange, like the ruins themselves. We do not ignore the glorious ruins of our temples, nor do we tire of them. Old and ancient though they be, they fascinate us. We actually love them, we visit them, we dream, sing and dance " where Baal once was worshiped in the days of King Solomon, where the Romans worshiped Jupiter and the Greeks worshiped Helios, the God of the Sun; where Bacchus had his devotees and Venus her votaries, where pagan built and Christian destroyed, where Theodosius crushed down the ardour of those who adored the gods; where the sons of Ishmael built a fortress and remained."

XVI

DAMASCUS, THE GEM OF THE EAST

I WISH to take my readers, for a few moments, to the oldest city in the world, Damascus, my father's home; the most historic, the most mysteriously fascinating, and, doubtless, the most beautiful of all cities of the antique world; with its population of five hundred thousand. Surviving all changes of the centuries that have swept over her, she still remains brilliant, calm, varied, captivating, and, above all, thoroughly Oriental.

The origin of the city of Damascus, like that of Baalbek, is unknown; but it is safe to say that it has stood since the dawn of creation. Isaiah termed Damascus "the head of Syria," Mohammed called it "a Paradise," Milman called the ancient city "queen of cities," while its native poet called it "the pearl of the East." We say in Arabic that Lebanon is the crown of Syria, Beirut is the gem set in the crown, but Damascus is the very heart of the gem. Twenty-seven centuries have passed away since the founding of the Roman Empire; Damascus was then an ancient city. The mysterious pyramids and still more mysterious and awe-inspiring sphinx have reared their towering and massive outlines above the sands of Egypt for more than three thousand years; Damascus is older than they. Compared to the old city, the great wall of China is a work of modern construction, while the oldest cities of the Western hemisphere are as saplings

compared to an old oak. Indeed, Damascus is the oldest important city, with an unbroken history reaching to the present time. There is scarcely a paving stone of the old city without its legends and traditions, upon which many of the world's greatest men have trod and bowed in adoration at its sanctuaries.

Nothing can exceed in beauty the scene, when the city first bursts upon the view, in all its surpassing vision of loveliness; lying like a huge pearl on its luxurious cushion of green velvet; a charming oasis filled with minarets and mosques, upon the edge of the far-stretching desert. From age to age, it has stood as a silent sentinel on an arid plain seventy-three miles from the Mediterranean Sea, surrounded by its orchards, vineyards, gardens, fountains and trees, with the River Barada flowing through its center.

The numerous rivers that flow into the city from the snow-crowned mountains are the cause of nature's rich vegetation. The Barada, formerly known as the Abana, at its source gushes out of the rocks at the rate of several hundred gallons a minute, and rushes madly along until it loses itself in the desert. It must be said that Damascus is the Barada; and, vice versa, the Barada is Damascus. All great civilizations have grown in the fertile valleys of great rivers, but no other lands and no other peoples have been so dependent on any stream as Damascus on the Barada. Rightly and justly did Naaman boast, "Are not Abana and Pharphar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" For, after viewing the muddy waters of the Jordan River in contrast with the clear sparkling waters of the Abana, the haughty Syrian captain might well have been indignant.

Damascus has been unique throughout its eventful history. It has been conquered and possessed by the greatest nations, but has withstood siege after siege. It has thrived under each succeeding power, and to-day still blossoms, "like a tree planted by the rivers of waters." It is renowned for its arts, and manufactures of the richest and most lustrous of silks, and the fame of the Damascene blade has spread throughout the world. It is rich in Eastern poetry and lore. Indeed, it was exalted by the Crusaders, reverenced by the Mohammedans, and still retains its poetic title to the present day.

According to Moslem traditions, when Mohammed stood upon a hill overlooking the city of Damascus, he gazed and gazed upon its beauty and splendour; then, suppressing his intense emotion, turned back with a sigh and would not enter the gates, but remarked to his companions, "If I once set my foot on such an earthly Paradise, I shall have no desire for the Paradise hereafter, for a man can only enter Paradise once and mine is above." It truly answers the Koran's description of Paradise, as "an orchard bearing delicious fruit ready to drop into the mouth."

Should we pause to consider the Damascus of to-day with the Damascus of the early centuries, we would be astounded at her extraordinary progress; but, through it all, she has never lost her Orientalism. She is a typical Arabian Nights city, to which Haroon-el-Raschid might return after a repose of a thousand years and find the same old manners and customs, the same odd bazaars with their brightly dressed purchasers, the old Arab sheikhs with flowing abias and "kafiyees," the merchants in baggy trousers and dignified "tar-

bouche" or fez, set at a rakish angle. Whenever I see a group of Shriners with their Oriental garb and their headgear standing on the backs of their heads, I feel like saying to some of them, "Now, if you will take those headgears and tip them a little more to the front, toward the right, with the tassel to the right, then you will look handsome." The majority of my people have never liked a change of any kind, nor do they desire it. They cling to the thought that what was good enough for their ancestors is good enough for them.

Some time ago, after I had given an address at a Kiwanis luncheon on the topic, "The Unchanging East," a gentleman came forward with a smile on his face and said, rather hesitatingly, "Princess, I know that you are burdened with many questions, but let me ask you this one: Is it the style in Syria to bob the hair?" I said, "Good man, we have no styles nor fads in that country. The majority of my people still dress in the same style of garments that were worn by Abraham centuries ago." It was very unusual for a man to ask such a question, although it is quite common among the ladies in my audiences; for I have had some come and ask me, "How long have you been in America?" and in a little while the same ones will return and ask, "How old were you when you left Syria?"

The Street called Straight, where Saul was led, blinded by the glory of God, to the home of Judas, is one of the longest streets in the old city. It is thronged with a variegated, hurrying crowd; and, here and there, a stately camel plods its way along, heavily laden with wares. The street is entirely protected from the sun

and rain by arched roofs reaching from shop to shop. Contrary to reports sent back to American newspapers, that it had been entirely destroyed in the Druze rebellion of 1925, only a very small portion of it suffered from bombardment by French airplanes. It is a maze of tiny shops, and in the Street called Straight is to be found all the wealth of the East in silks and rugs. I never tire of wandering along this unique thoroughfare, for each day reveals to the mind some new and fascinating characteristic of the Easterner. The house of Ananias is just off the Street, and in the Christian quarter of the city. It now serves as a chapel, the light coming through tiny skylights from the courtyard above.

Passing out of the east gate, we find people to-day, from all parts of the Far East paying tribute as of olden days. A little to the right we approach the wall where Paul was let down by his disciples to go forth as the apostle of Christ. The walls are of great antiquity, and are now in the hands of Damascus officials who are doing all in their power to preserve that historic portion of the city. A tiny house is built upon the walls, with a cross in the window, denoting the exact spot from which Paul escaped from the persecution of the Jews.

Strange as it may seem, the old home of Naaman, the great Syrian captain, who, at the height of his glory, was stricken with leprosy, is still standing, and, indeed, is one of the oldest buildings of this far-famed city. It has long been retained as a home for lepers, but, during the recent insurrection, many of the inmates, who were Druze, became so embittered and enraged that they broke their bonds and fled to join

The Famous Palace of Asaad Pascha Azem, Showing a View of the Parlor Belonging Exclusively to the Ladies of the Harem.

their tribes. The government has since removed the colony to a considerable distance from the city walls.

Perhaps one of the most interesting places in the ancient capital is the palace of Asaad Pascha Azem, vali of Damascus, which was built in 1749. This unique residence has been acquired by the French, who have turned it into a museum of Moslem art and archæology, where students and artists may have the opportunity to study Mohammedan history, art and architecture. It was fired in 1925 by the rebels, and many of its precious antiquities were either carried away or destroyed by them. The main parlour, with its art work, was completely destroyed, the ceiling of which would cost two thousand Egyptian pounds to replace, and then it would require ten years to paint. It was inlaid with mosaics and Damascus tiles, which are now a lost art. The private baths of the palace, each one comprising eight rooms, are unusual in their arrangement. They are paved with tiles in varied Oriental shades, and the steaming water bubbles up from the center of the room from a circular tank, and flows over its rounded edges.

On one of my trips from Beirut to Damascus, I occupied the same compartment with the wife of one of the direct descendants of Asaad Pascha Azem, who was living in this palace when the city was beseiged by the Druze—a very modest, unassuming little woman. She was garbed in a long black silk mantle, a crushed girdle bound about her waist. On her head she wore a small round turban, to which was attached a long heavy black veil, thrown carelessly back over her forehead. When our train approached each village, or whenever a man would pass our door, immediately she

would lower the veil. The only man who could look upon her face was her Egyptian attendant, who came often to see if we needed anything.

In a vivid way, yet with overwhelming bitterness in her soul, she pictured to me with what terror and fear they hid behind these walls while bombs were being dropped upon them from every direction. As the train wound in and out over the Lebanon mountains, she would pause in her conversation, and point out, from time to time, the crumbling ruins of a town or city which had been destroyed by the rebels; and, in a trembling voice, very quiet, but strangely full of deepest feeling, would add, "The half, my friend, of the horror through which the natives passed has never been revealed to the American newspapers." Coming closer, she whispered softly, "I say these things to you, but I beg of you never let it be known that Zaneiba told you,—for I fear the French."

There are more than one hundred and twenty-five mosques in Damascus, the largest of which is the Grand Mosque, or the church of St. John, the Baptist. It was built by Arcadius, and turned into a mosque by the Caliph Wadi first in 706, and is more remarkable for its great size and antiquity than for its architectural beauty. It has existed through all the changes of the city, having been used as a heathen temple, a Christian church, and now a Mohammedan mosque. Here, in the days of Israel's glory, was, doubtless, the scene of the worship of the god of Rimmon, and here it was that Naaman was "wont to bow down in the house of Rimmon." Over its main entrance is the Greek inscription, "Thy kingdom, O Lord, is an everlasting kingdom and Thy dominion endureth forever."

Ragi Bey Abou Haïdar, Counseiller Ala Cour de Cassation of Grand Liban.

Indeed how strange to find such a prophecy proclaimed at the very entrance of one of the most sacred and revered shrines of the followers of the Prophet.

On my recent visit to the city of my fathers, the Grand Mosque was closed for repairs, not even opened for the hours of prayer. The sheikh in attendance personally opened the doors for me and enabled me to secure some moving pictures of the interior, with he, himself, as our principal character. The rugs within the mosque represent a fabulous sum, and, although the doors were locked, they were also guarded by numerous stalwart Moslems. The interior contains, the Moslems declare, the tomb of St. John, the Baptist; this, however, is incorrect; it is the tomb of St. John, the Damascene.

XVII

WITHIN THE HEART OF THE GEM

ONE of the striking features of the old city is its bazaars, famous for their treasures of silks, carpets, silver and gold ornaments, brass, ornamental furniture, blades and swords. Here, one finds a picture that no artist can ever truly portray, as gaily dressed purchasers, wandering musicians, water-carriers and dancing girls move along. The narrow winding streets, where even a donkey will block the way, are roofed with silks and Oriental rugs, and often timber, giving the profound impression of twilight gloom. Each different trade has its own street—the shoe bazaars, the rug bazaars, the brass, the ornamental woodwork, inlaid with mother-of-pearl. The shops are tiny cubby-holes, yet all the wares of the Orient are tucked away there and the wealth contained therein is enormous. Here, the Moslem merchant sits cross-legged, all day long, his goods surrounding him, with his native pipe on one side and the Koran on the other, which he reads when not otherwise engaged or while waiting upon the mercy of Allah for a customer. Should you happen to stop before his shop at the time of prayer he is oblivious to the fact, and, if you really wish an article, you must be content to wait until he has finished his devotions.

The Orientals' love of bargaining is an inherited

A Damascus Street Scene.

trait, handed down from the days of Abraham, when he bargained for the Cave of Macpelah. If you are in a hurry, do not come to the bazaars, for shopping in Damascus can never be done in a rush. Upon your arrival, the merchant, after the customary salutations have been exchanged, offers you the foaming cup of coffee, which is so much a part of the Oriental's life; then, more greetings, when he sets before you sweetened drinks or the famous Damascus sweets. If you have found the article you desire, you cannot say, "How much is that shawl, or tray, or piece of silk, or whatever it may be?" and take it, all in a moment's time. Ah, no, the merchant may reply, "This is your shop, you belong to us, take what you want for nothing." But, when you insist upon a fixed amount, he will name a price about six times what he expects to receive; and, if you should pay him that exact sum, he would be disgusted, because you had denied him his favourite pastime of bargaining.

You offer him your price, which is much lower than you intend to pay. Then follows noisy and heated discussions, in which everyone present joins, and the merchant, fondling his beard, swears by the name of Allah you will ruin him, and his family will perish from starvation. He, therefore, folds his goods and replaces them upon the shelves, and you leisurely stroll out, but, before the threshold is reached, he recalls you and says, "We are brothers; let nothing stand between us." And the bargaining begins all over again; but your price continues to go up, and his slowly continues to come down, until you reach a favourable understanding, and the purchase is completed.

After you have lived awhile in the East, and become

accustomed to the Oriental way of doing business, the habit of bargaining takes hold of you, and you soon find it far more thrilling than paying the price "as advertised." The only real bargaining experience I have ever had during my sojourn in America was while I was filling a series of lecture engagements in St. Louis. I needed a new edition of my circulars; and two of the best printing houses in the city were recommended. But I was really astonished when my manager showed me the estimates, to find that the first house had charged me $75 per thousand, and the other $28. Both were to use the same quality of paper, the same half-tone cuts and the same amount of printing. I remarked at the time that the first house must be charging me for the title, or perhaps that was what you call American bargaining. I can assure you, he had it done for the $28, for he was a true Scotchman.

Nowhere in the Orient do you feel the deep mysticism than in the bazaars devoted to the rugs, for an Oriental rug has a magic fascination that is difficult to evade. Here are piled hundreds of rugs—an indescribable glow of dusky splendour. Unlike the magic carpets of old that could whisk you away to their own lands, these bring the soul and charm of their lands to you, as the merchants unfold rug after rug before you; sometimes the blue of the skies, the yellow of lemons; or pink, or rose, or peacock, or the red of the plums; and on all that silken sheen which so captivates the senses. In one are woven the soft colours of an Eastern dawn, when the sun paints the sky with a myriad of colours, and you can almost hear the echoes of the nightingale in the garden at twilight, or the bard singing his love songs behind walled gar-

dens. Then, too, there are the coarser rugs, telling of the wandering tribes, full of feuds and of many warriors. Indeed, rugs are so much a part of my country that you come under their spell as soon as you near the East.

Equally interesting are the tiny shops devoted to gold and silversmiths, where filigree jewelry of the most fantastic patterns is minutely carved and set with precious stones. The work is done entirely by the naked eye. Men sit in rows, cross-legged, before tiny tables, and to each one is allotted different work: to one the making of the filigree; to another the cutting and polishing of the gems; to another the mounting of the stones; and to another the putting together of all the pieces. Although their fingers fly like lightning, it is a slow process, for it must all be done in perfect workmanship. Each piece contains the precious and semi-precious native stones: the diamond, the ruby, the emerald, the aquamarine, the pearl, lapis lazuli, the sapphire, the topaz, the onyx and the peridot.

The homes of the Damascus rich are veritable palaces, but the visitor would never guess it from their exteriors. They are surrounded by high stone walls, with millions of bits of broken glass on top. They serve a two-fold purpose—for protection and absolute privacy. The walls are broken only by a huge iron gate or a wooden door, with an iron knocker, giving not the slightest indication of what may be seen on the inside, once that gate has swung open. For within the walls, the true life of the East is lived, in ease and luxury; here one finds old manners and customs still perpetuated.

But our picture of this famous city would not be

complete without a glimpse into its cafés, for the coffee house is the haven of the Oriental, where the stately Arab sips his coffee with no thought of the future. It is a gathering place for story-telling and for the discussion of the events of the day. Here in this seat of learning they grow to understand the thoughts and hearts of each other. Men sit around with conversation beads of amber, ivory and mother-of-pearl, worn by years of handling, for men in the East always toy with a string of beads as they talk. A friend of mine, Dr. W. H. G., while visiting Syria, remarked about the beads, and asked why they used them. "To keep us from quarrelling," was the reply. "Then you had better send us some to America, for we need them over there." There are literally thousands of cafés in Damascus—the finest in all Syria, and nearly all of them are built over the rushing water. Indeed, we boast that the first coffee house originated in the antique city.

Coffee is the true child of the East, and its home, primarily, was among the hills of Arabia. The story of its discovery is well told in the Arabic. "A wandering tribe of the desert, while leading their flocks in search of new pastures, halted beneath the shadow of a huge coffee tree to prepare their noonday meal. Suddenly the sweet odour of the burnt berries attracted the sheikh, or prince, who at once remarked to his company, "If the odour is so delicious, what must be the taste!" They gathered the well-roasted kernels, pounded them in stone mortars which they carried with them for other purposes, until they became as finely pulverized as flour; prepared it in their own way, drank of it and were merry. Hence, this discovery by the

Typical Sight Within the Cafes of the Antique City.

ancient tribe of Bedouins became known as the famous Arabian coffee, and, to this day, our favourite brand is called "Emir-el-Arab" (Prince of the Arabs). But when the Turks entered the country, they adopted the name and introduced it as the Turkish beverage. It is, however, altogether unlike coffee as prepared in other parts of the world.

It plays an important part on every occasion. Not to serve coffee to a guest would not only mean that he was unwelcome, but would be regarded as an insult. The tiny cups must never be filled to the brim—that would denote a heart full of envy and jealousy. To offer it to an enemy would signify willingness to become reconciled. It is customarily served twice—the first is the welcoming cup and the last the departing cup. One of our famous Arabian poets has written: "O, coffee, thou dispellest the cares of the great; thou bringest back those who wander from the paths of knowledge. Grief cannot exist where it grows; yea, even sorrow humbles itself in obedience before its power. Coffee is our gold; drink with confidence and regard not the prattle of fools, who condemn without knowledge." Verily, it is the nectar of the gods. The delicious beverage, with its rich creamy foam, the oil that the coffee contains, truly intoxicates like new wine and makes you feel like the gods of Syria.

XVIII

PALESTINE, THE LAND OF MYSTICISM

LEAVING Beirut by car, we are soon on our way toward Palestine and its historic places, and passing through the ancient cities of Tyre, Sidon, Accre, with Haifa, the gateway to the Holy Land, as our first point of interest. Accre is a sleepy old town. It was once the famous headquarters of the Crusaders; with remnants of their castles and walls still existing, but gradually crumbling into decay. It was also the home of Bahai Allah, and his home and gardens are just outside the city walls. The last few miles between Accre and Haifa, the road leads along the shores of the blue Mediterranean, where the sands are as hard and as smooth as asphalt; when, as we round a promontory, Mount Carmel, with Haifa nestling at its feet, bursts upon the view. Until forty years ago, Haifa remained the same as in Bible days, having a population of some four hundred souls, most of whom were fishermen. Before the World War it had increased to eight thousand, but to-day it has a population of thirty-five thousand, of whom twelve thousand are Jews.

There are two places of importance in Haifa. One is the tomb and hanging gardens of Abbas Effendi, son of Bahai Allah. The servant who conducted us through the grounds was at one time a very wealthy man, but, having given all to the Bahaist movement,

now acts in the capacity of a servant. The building containing the tomb is divided into two sections of three rooms each. The first holds the tomb of Abbas Effendi in the center, with a room on either side, one for women and one for men. The other section contains the tomb of Baptist, the forerunner of Bahai Allah. Candles are kept constantly burning in both tombs. Shoes are laid off before entering upon the sacred ground. The interior is furnished with Oriental rugs and Persian shawls of matchless worth.

The gardens are well laid out, with the huge trees, under which Abbas Effendi spent his last hours gazing out upon the Mediterranean, in the center. But, with all the pomp and splendour that surround the spot, the followers of the prophet only number some three hundred in all Syria and Palestine. Their stronghold, however, is in the United States, with a total membership of two million.

Mount Carmel with its Carmelite monastery is an ideal spot, but rapidly being built up by the Jews. The chapel of the monastery covers the Cave of Elijah, and, in viewing it, one's thought and fancy fly to the far-off days of the prophet who challenged the priests of Baal to obtain fire from heaven. Here once a year, on July 22, pilgrims throng from all over the country to celebrate the Festival of St. Elijah.

Palestine to-day is passing through a severe crisis. Jews have flocked in by the thousands, bringing little or nothing with them, until to-day there are over twenty thousand unemployed in the land, resulting in much crime and robbery. Unemployment is on the increase, and, in several instances, Jewish colonists who have employed Arabs instead of Jewish labourers, have

been attacked by their native competitors and have had to be protected by the police. Half a million dollars has been spent to relieve the hardships of the unemployed, but the funds for that purpose are almost exhausted. A month prior to my visit, the Anglican bishop, returning from Haifa to Jerusalem, was robbed, and his chauffeur murdered. Fifty thousand Jews poured into the country in one year. There were no places for them to live; so shacks were built, temporarily. Most of the immigrants are as poor as poor can be, but all seem happy to be once again in the land of their fathers. A Jew will tell you he never expects to see the land flowing with milk and honey—that will come to his children or his children's children. They have sacrified all to be here, content with only one meal a day, tilling the arid soil and casting out the rocks that have lain there these thousands of years. And thus the fulfillment of the prophecy,—" For they shall return to Palestine, the land which Jehovah God said shall be theirs for ever and ever." But the conditions of colonization have been the same from the earliest centuries. It was not the Puritan fathers who made the America of to-day; they only gave us the foundation, and their ancestors have accomplished the rest.

On the way down from Mount Carmel, there stands a poor little grocery store, whose proprietor is endeavouring to eke out an existence. Strange as it may seem, this man was none other than the general who surrendered Medina, after holding out for more than a year. Thus it is the same story: those who were once great have fallen by the wayside. In Jerusalem, the son-in-law of Abdul Hamid is living in dire want,

possessing nothing, yet striving to keep up appearances. Living conditions are exorbitant in Palestine, and prices soar mightily. For example, twenty years ago, a plot of ground in Haifa was held at two hundred pounds and then could not be sold. In 1925, that same plot sold at four thousand pounds. Before the World War, houses with their lovely gardens were renting at forty pounds a year, but as soon as the country passed into British control, the government raised the rents to two hundred pounds. The lack of cultivation that one notices in parts of Palestine must not be attributed to the laziness of the " fellaheen," but to the fact that such heavy taxes are levied upon them; the government claiming two-thirds of the profit, and leaving only one-third to the peasants, which is not enough for the bare necessities of life, to say nothing of their hard labour.

But in and around the Jewish colonies, the plains are teeming with cultivation, the oxen and camels hauling the wooden plows across the flat fields. The Plain of Omar, extending from Galilee to Haifa, the most fertile spot in all Syria, has been purchased by Jews, and new colonies are rapidly springing up everywhere.

From Haifa, we are soon winding through the hills of Judea on our way to Jerusalem. Train service throughout Palestine I found " par excellence," considering the many adverse circumstances. Of course, one must not expect to find a Twentieth Century Limited or a Canadian Pacific, but travelling by train is far more comfortable and less dirty than by motor. On every side are still seen reminders of the Crusaders. Hour after hour, we climb in and out among those barren, wrinkled and purple hills; one's imagination

runs riot, and in fancy you can see the patriarchs and prophets of old passing in an unceasing line on memory's screen. You cannot help but wonder if it were not in these very hills that the Master spent His thirty years in study and prayer.

We pass the plains where Samson met the Philistines in battle, and, a little later, the cave where Delilah visited him; the old town of Ramleh where the giants of Bible days dwelt, and then Jerusalem, the Golden, greets our eyes. The first glimpse of it, when approaching it by train, I must admit, is rather disillusioning, for the Jews from all over the world are much in evidence; new colonies dotting the hillside about, with everything from a Jersey City outskirt shack to handsome and substantial stone buildings.

XIX

"EL-KHUDS-EL-SHAREEF"—THE EXALTED CITY

MY emotions on beholding the Holy City, the Eye of the World, the Hope of the Nations, after so long a sojourn in America, cannot be easily defined; as the city "set on a hill which cannot be hid" rose before me. All the past, with its mighty men, who walked with Jehovah, came to my mind, overpowering me with amazing weight. The whole history of the sacred place rushed to my memory and, in grateful reverence I acknowledged Him, who had so distinguished above all countries—my native land.

The present population of Jerusalem is about 90,000, of which 70,000 are Jews. The new Jerusalem, however, is most uninteresting, but the old city, within the walls, is where the supreme spell of the Orient is felt, the moment you enter one of its seven gates; instantly you realize you are treading upon sacred ground. Old manners and customs that the Christ knew, still exist—the same old market places, the tiny, crooked streets with houses tumbling together overhead. To see the old city, one must walk everywhere, for no motors or carriages are permitted inside the walls. There has been no electricity wired in, and when England took possession of the Holy City and found at the Jaffa Gate a tower with a clock upon it, placed there by Abdul Hamid, one of their first acts

was to remove it, for they declared its modern architecture ruined the beauty of the ancient walls.

It is, truly, one of the most fascinating of ancient cities, where one can wander at will, following those vaulted streets, drinking in every drop of its preciousness. It is the holy ground of the three greatest religions, mingled with churches, synagogues, mosques, minarets and monasteries,—the city that was adorned by Solomon and hallowed by the Christ. The tourist, who visits this land and has only two weeks to do it in, can never understand it nor appreciate it when viewing it only in a flitting glance. Under the entire city are the huge quarries from which all the stones were taken to build the city walls. Nothing is more delightful than to walk these walls in the full of the moon; then, fancy conjures up the passing of those characters that made history and lore.

Under the dark, blue Syrian sky, covered with myriads of stars, sad like a tombstone, stands the Wailing Wall. It is like a fantastic dream, covered with a veil wrought of moonbeams and, here and there, from the cracks, little branches are sprouting, filled with tiny white flowers which fall to the earth like drops of tears. Below, where a red light dimly illumines the Wall, barefooted the children of Israel are praying and weeping—mourning because their temple is now desolate and their city ruled by strangers. They come from the four corners of the globe, they speak seventy different languages; their dress, their faces, and their movements are as different as differ the nations one from the other, where they have been held in bondage. Only by the Wall of Lamentation they become children of one people, with one national sorrow and with one

The Garden of Gethsemane and the Same Old Olive Trees that Watched the Master's Agony.

common prayer. The best time to visit the Wall is from Friday evening at sundown until Saturday morning at nine o'clock.

From the Wailing Wall we slowly and silently wend our way through the crowded streets to Mount Moriah, the site where Abraham offered up Isaac, where stood the Temple of Solomon and the Ark of the Covenant; where David built an altar unto the Lord and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. It is the revered spot of Christian, Moslem and Jew and over it Emir Abdul Malek built the present Dome of the Rock, often called the Mosque of Omar, but quite wrongly. The Jews still firmly believe that the Ark of the Covenant, erected by Moses in the wilderness, which has been lost since the time of the captivity, is hidden away within the bosom of this rock.

In 637 A. D. when the Caliph Omar occupied Jerusalem, he found on the spot nothing but débris and desolation, although it had long been sacred in the eyes of the Moslems, for, from this very rock, according to their traditions, the Prophet ascended into heaven. They point to an impression in the side of the rock, resembling a man's foot, which they say is the mark left by the foot of Mohammed. The Caliph built a mosque upon this site but nothing remains of it to-day, save its name, "Mosque of Omar." The real Mosque of Omar, however, stands directly opposite the Holy Sepulchre. When the Caliph entered Jerusalem, it was at twelve o'clock noon. Wishing to say his prayers and finding no suitable place the Patriarch of the Holy Sepulchre invited him to use the church. But he refused, saying, "If I pray in your church, then the Moslems must take it for a mosque."

With the reign of Abdul Malek, in 685 A. D., the history of the present buildings begins. Jerusalem was a holy city to all as well as Moslems, and, to the pious Caliph its glorification seemed obvious. So, he collected a large sum of money and erected the Dome of the Rock in 691, and, also, the Mosque adjoining, "El Aksa" in 693. In 1016, a severe earthquake shock caused the Dome to collapse and it was rebuilt in 1022 by the Caliph Hakeem. In 1099, Jerusalem was captured by the Crusaders. They occupied all the temple area and converted the Dome of the Rock into a church, and erected an altar on the Rock itself. The edifice was regarded by them as a veritable temple of the Lord, from which the Knights Templar, whose order was formed there, take their name. It is here interesting to note, that as a temple of the Lord and symbol of the order, it served as a model for churches that were later built all over Europe. The Mosque of "El Aksa" was turned into a royal palace, called the palace of Solomon, while the vast subterranean structures were used by the Knights as stables.

In 1187, Saladin captured Jerusalem and drove the Crusaders out. His first act was to put back the buildings to their former use as places of Moslem worship, and destroyed every trace of the Templars' occupation. In the Dome of the Rock, he caused the walls to be covered with marble and set up beautiful inscriptions, which may still be seen above the open gallery of the cupola. He, also, restored the stucco incrustations of the inner dome.

The temple area has remained in Moslem control ever since, and, although the Crusaders again occupied Jerusalem in 1229 to 1244, they did not reach the

sacred enclosure, for it had been agreed that it should remain in Mohammedan possession. During the next three centuries various repairs and additions were made, but the most important were carried out after the Turkish conquest, during the reign of Slaiman, the Magnificent (1520–66). A large part of the glazed tiles upon the exterior of the shrine and most of the windows were added in his time.

The Dome of the Rock stands on an irregular platform, some twelve feet above the level of the area and is approached from every side by flights of broad steps, surmounted at the landing by façades, called, "mawazan" (scales), because of their belief that on the judgment day the scales of good and evil will be suspended there. It has four entrances, each facing one of the points of the compass. The walls of the building are decorated with marble facings on the lower courses and glazed tiles above. Unfortunately, many of the original tiles have dropped off and others have been replaced without thought for harmony of colour or pattern; still, the effect is striking. The frieze is inscribed with verses from the Koran; and, above rests the Dome, built in 1022 by the Caliph Hakeem, slightly flattened on one side and surmounted by the crescent. The edifice, itself, is the same as erected by Abdul Malek, but the outer decorations are due to Slaiman, the Magnificent.

As we enter the Dome of the Rock, "Kubbat-el Sahra," the metal doors on either side of the entrance are worthy of notice for an inscription, of recent discovery, proves them to have been set up toward the end of the fifteenth century. As we first enter, it is almost too dark to see, but as the eye becomes accus-

tomed to the light, the beauty of the structure, with its splendour of decorations, reveals itself. In the center, directly below the dome, is the sacred rock, standing about six feet above the floor of the mosque. This is where the Crusaders had set up their altar, and traces of the steps, which led up to it, are still seen. Directly under the rock is a curious chamber enclosed by stone walls. The dome rests on an inner system of piers and columns, forming a circle and connected with each other by a wrought iron grille, dating from the twelfth century—an unique remnant of the Crusaders' decorations.

The walls of the edifice are covered with marble slabs and pierced with windows, gifts of various sultans, from time to time. They are made of plaster and their patterns consist of an intricate openwork tracery, in which are bits of coloured glass. The effect is one of great softness and richness of colour, which is partly due to the skill with which the tracery is hollowed out of the plaster and cut away toward the inside in such a manner that the openings become provided with a kind of cone for the softer diffusions of the rays of light.

XX

THE MECCA OF THE SOUL

COME with me from the Dome of the Rock and we will follow along the Via Dolorosa, and, beginning at the Palace of Pilate, visit the various stations of the Cross leading to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. A part of Pilate's house is now a Moslem college, the rest belonging to the Sisters of Zion, a French Catholic organization. In 1858 they began extensive excavations and found the Military Court, or Prætorium and the Hall of Judgment; also, the three arches of the Palace, one large and two smaller ones. The Military Court they left exactly as they found it, where Pilate, after judging the Christ, gave Him into the hands of the multitudes. This old court now serves as their chapel, with the altar placed in one of the smaller arches. It is made from the stones taken from the Hall of Judgment, for they believe them to have been made more sacred by the footsteps of our Lord. In a small recess of the Military Court is an old Roman proclamation stone, where the criers gave the news to the populace.

Passing from the chapel and through low-vaulted underground passages, we come to the Hall of Judgment; here, somewhere, Pilate placed his throne to judge Him. The pavements are, without doubt, the very same, for in them are to be seen the marks where Roman soldiers played their games. At the extreme

end, is a portion of an old Roman road, with the grooves in them, possibly used to keep the horses from slipping; and, then, the Via Dolorosa, six feet below the level of the present one. As we emerge from the building we see a part of a large arch, known as " Ecce Homo." This marks the spot where the Cross was laid upon Christ. In the earthquake of July 11, 1927, this arch was completely destroyed.

Each Friday afternoon, a group of Latins, composed of Germans, French and Russians, gather at the house of Pilate and traverse the Via Dolorosa, kneeling in prayer at each station of the Cross, until they reach the Holy Sepulchre, where they hold their main service. Each station is marked by some memorial—where Simon, the Cyrenian, took up the Cross (Luke 23:26), where the women were weeping (Luke 23:27–29), where Veronica placed the handkerchief upon His face and where He failed. Surely, the Via Dolorosa is in every way a Sorrowful Way.

Approaching the Holy Sepulchre, and standing near the German church, we see the Russian excavations, showing a portion of the second wall and which proves conclusively that Calvary stood without the city walls and that the present site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre covers the exact spot. The German Protestant church is an imposing edifice, erected in 1908 by the Kaiser. They have left in front the old arch built by the Crusaders in the twelfth century, and near by stands the Muristan, or the Hospital of the Knights of St. John.

At the entrance to the Holy Sepulchre, at the top of the flight of three steps, are the bases of pillars, built by the Empress Helena in 327 A. D. and which formed

a part of a rotunda which she erected especially for pilgrims. These pillars were destroyed by the Persians in 614. As we descend these steps, running across the front, we find on the right six small chapels, belonging to the various sects which control the church, the Greek Orthodox, the Abyssinians, the Assyrians. At the immediate entrance is the tomb of one of the Crusaders, Phillipe d'Aubigny, who was on King John's council when the Magna Carta was signed, and who came with the Crusade of Frederic II in 1229 and died here in 1236. In 1926, an English visitor to the Holy City claimed direct descendance from D'Aubigny and objected to the stone, covering his last resting place, being walked over by thousands, so she forced the government to move it. They placed it to the right of the entrance and covered it with iron bars, putting the Crusaders' cross in the middle.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was built by the Empress Helena in 327 A. D. The style of architecture is of purely Romanesque composition, dark, heavy, yet truly picturesque. It was destroyed by the Persians in A. D. 614 and was rebuilt by the Crusaders in the twelfth century. It has twice been fired by the Armenians, in 1810 and 1828. It is now in the hands of six different sects—Greek Orthodox, Latins, Armenians, Copts (Egyptian Christians), Assyrians, and Abyssinians. A movement is now in progress by which the Greek Orthodox will obtain full control of the church and they, in turn, have invited the Anglicans to join with them. Above the door are carvings in marble, representing the Last Supper, Christ's Triumphal Entry, Christ in the Tomb, Mary washing His feet and Lazarus rising from the dead.

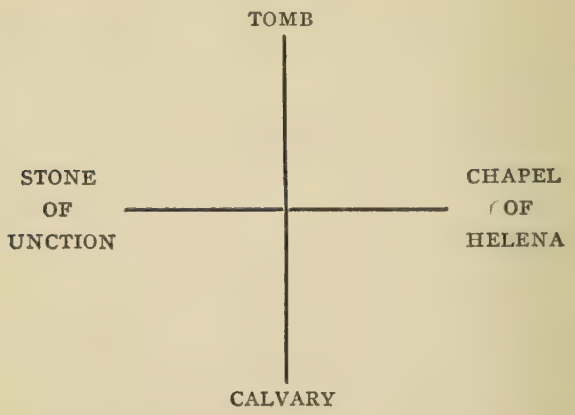
A part of the Triumphal Entry is gone. A priest, in 1908, walking by the Damascus Gate, saw a small lad selling a portion of it. He purchased it from him and sent it to the Paris Museum. During the heavy snows of 1926, another piece disappeared. The British are now preparing to encase the entire carvings within iron bars.

On entering the church, the aspect it presents is one of gloomy grandeur. On the left is a divan belonging to the Moslems, for the keeper of the key to the Holy Sepulchre is a Mohammedan; the reason being because of the everlasting rivalry and jealousy that exists among the different sects. Each time he opens and closes the huge doors, which is five times a day, he demands fifty piasters from them. No visitor is permitted to enter the sepulchre with bare arms, low necks or with head uncovered and, until recently, it was necessary to remove the shoes. Directly opposite the entrance, lies the Stone of Unction. Upon this slab of marble, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus anointed the body of our Lord and wrapped Him in fine linens, after removing His body from the Cross. Hanging above it are four lamps belonging to the Greek Orthodox, two to the Armenians, one to the Latins and one to the Copts. This, however, is not the original stone, for according to the American Research Society, the real one lies thirty feet below.

Turning to the right, we ascend to Calvary. The first sight that greets the eye is a statue of the Virgin, done in silver and gold and covered with costly jewels, which have been presented as gifts from ruling monarchs and worshipers from all over the world; also, medals of many kinds presented by different generals.

The accurate value is unknown, but it has been estimated at approximately seven million Egyptian pounds. Calvary is divided between the Orthodox and the Latins—from the Virgin to the west wall, Greek Orthodox; and from the Virgin to the East wall, Latins. To the left of the Virgin is the spot where the Cross stood and on either side huge candlesticks representing the crosses of the two thieves. The rock, near the foss in which our Lord's cross was fixed, is much cracked, because it could not suffer the death of its Maker without splitting—"and the rocks were rent in twain." Directly below is the chapel of Adam and the rent in the rock is clearly visible here. Legend declares that the blood of Christ, flowing down through the rent upon the tomb of Adam, purged his sin and renewed his life,—"and the graves were opened and many of the bodies of the saints which slept, arose" (Matthew 28:52). Above the spot where the Cross stood is a painting of Christ, set in gold and diamonds, which was presented by a woman from Athens and above it, written in lustrous diamonds in three languages, Greek, Latin and Hebrew, "This is Jesus, King of the Jews." This was presented by Russia at a cost of six million pounds.

Leading from Calvary are steps worn smooth and slippery by the feet of the countless multitudes, to the Greek chapel containing pictures, lamps and hangings of the purest gold, which are priceless. These are shown only to the public at Easter time. In the center of the Cathedral is a stone called the Center of the World. Some, however, claim it marks only the center of the Holy Sepulchre.



Leaving the Cathedral, we find ourselves opposite the Tomb which remains the same to-day as when planned by Constantine in 327 A. D. Up to that time, it had been the ordinary type of Jewish tombs, cut in the rock of the hillside, with two chambers—a tomb chamber, with a shelf large enough to receive the body; and an arch over it, a very small entrance to be closed by a stone. A very splendid specimen of these may be seen in the Tomb of the Kings. To-day, however, no rock is visible where the Body lay, for it has been encased in marble within and without. A great number of lamps in gold and silver are burning continually, while fragrant perfume and incense fill the air. Here the visitor lingers, loath to depart, solemnized, almost awestricken. We must never leave the Tomb without walking backwards.

Before entering the Tomb, there is a small chapel containing the Stone of the Angel, or a portion of the stone which closed the entrance. At the rear of the

Tomb is a small chapel, enclosed with an iron grille, belonging to the Copts. Ibrahim Pascha paid to the Greek patriarch the sum of two million pounds for this tiny sanctuary. Passing through a small door, we enter a dark chamber, belonging now to the Babylonians, but formerly to the Armenians. Upon the altar is an ancient picture, with features scarcely visible and partly torn away. Pilgrims who visit the shrine always tear a bit of the portrait to carry away with them. They firmly believe that money placed on the altar will immediately double in value. Stooping low, we pass from this chapel to the tombs of Nicodemus and Joseph, small openings cut in solid rock.

Surrounding the Greek Cathedral are numerous lesser shrines and chapels, belonging to the various orders. The chapel belonging to the Armenians, where Christ appeared to His mother; the chapel of the Mock Coronation and the Column of Scourging (these incidents, however, did not take place at Calvary); the chapel belonging to the Latins, where He appeared unto Mary Magdalene; the chapel "where His friends stood afar off;" the chapel of John, the Beloved, when He commanded him to take His mother and go home; another chapel, "the parting of His garments;" a Greek chapel of Longinus, the Roman soldier, who thrust his spear into His side and the chapel of the Prison and the Stocks and Shrine of the penitent Thief.

Descending a flight of steps from the chapel of the Parting of His Garments, we enter the chapel of Helena. According to the records of the mother church of Syria, the execution of our Lord was hurried and unexpected. There was a great feast draw-

ing nigh and all traces of the execution must hurriedly be cleared away; if the victims were not dead, kill them and let their bodies be removed and the workmen hurriedly cast the crosses down the nearest cistern. As the years went by, this cistern probably filled with dirt and débris, when Titus, conquering Jerusalem in 70 A. D., ordered his men to demolish the Holy City and to leave nothing standing but the three great towers and the wall on the west. Two hundred years later, this site was covered by the platform of Hadrian's temple to Venus.

Then Helena, mother of Constantine, filled with a passionate desire to find the " true cross " and having had heavenly guidance, journeyed to the Holy City. Her first act was to remove the Temple of Venus and to begin excavations near the spot. As they dug down into the lower cistern, she sat at a little window, still seen in the chapel, and threw money to the workmen to dig faster. At length, they came upon the three crosses, and at once the signal fires blazed forth from tower to tower announcing its discovery. One of these towers is still standing near Roberts College at Constantinople.

When the workers found the crosses, it then became a question of which one had held the Body of Christ. A wise old sage came forth and suggested that a dead man be placed upon each of them. Acting accordingly, they laid the dead upon each one but upon the third, he arose. While all this was taking place in Jerusalem, the persecution of the Christians was at its height in other parts of the world. The Roman cohort had found a band of them worshiping in a cave in Constantinople. They were bound and brought be-

fore Constantine. He inquired of them whom they were worshiping and while telling of the Christ, His birth at Bethlehem, His life and ministry, and of His death upon the Cross, a fiery cross appeared in the heavens to Constantine, and thus his conversion to Christianity dated from that time. At the very time the True Cross was found, he was placing upon the banners of his empire the Cross, with these words, "In this sign conquer."

Upon the discovery of the Cross, it was cut up and part was sent to Constantinople but the largest part, however, remained in Jerusalem and was encased in a silver box and used only once a year, on Good Friday. The nails were sent to Constantine and made into bits for his horse and a crest for his helmet, that they might go with him into battles. The later fortunes of the True Cross were many—its capture by the Persians and its recovery by the Emperor himself. In 741 A. D., when Moslem control became flourishing, the Sultan gave a great feast. The Czar of Russia, ancestor of the last Czar, and his officials had heard that a part of the Cross was still in Constantinople. He sent representatives to the feast, carrying with them costly gifts. The Sultan was quite overwhelmed by these immense tokens and pondering on what he might send to the Czar in return, called in to consultation his chief vizier. Now, this vizier was a shrewd and cunning man, one of the prominent officials of the Russian court, through whom the Czar had learned of the whereabouts of the Cross. Assuming the responsibility, he said to the Sultan: "I have a plan that will please these Christians. We have in our treasury a piece of wood which is of no value to us, and they

will be more than happy to get it." The Sultan at first refused to listen. To send back a piece of worthless wood in exchange for such stupendous gifts was an unheard of thing. But the vizier was persistent and the Sultan finally consented.

The vizier and the Russian representatives escaped by night with the precious part of the Cross. Immediately the city was visited by the worst earthquake ever known in its history, which shook it to the very foundations. The Sultan, when he had learned of its sacredness, tried in vain to retrieve the precious fragment.

There are now in Jerusalem at least three pieces of the " real cross." I saw the two that are in the Greek Orthodox treasury in the Holy Sepulchre; one of them set in a gold cross, encrusted with rubies and diamonds, which is only used when the Patriarch holds a Te Deum on the birthday of King George V. One small part is in the Armenian treasury, and it is said that they in turn gave a tiny portion to the Latins, who possessed none.

The motley crowd that one sees upon the streets of Jerusalem is appalling; the variety of Eastern colours and the babels of tongues. Jews, representing all parts of the world, speaking Russian, German, French, Polish, Slavic, Yiddish, rub shoulders with the Arabs in their picturesque native dress. The thoroughfares are filled with shepherds leading their flocks; camels, donkeys, Arabian horses with tinkling bells; carriages and still more carriages mixed with a few automobiles; water-carriers, sweet sellers, bread vendors, sellers of wood inlaid with mother-of-pearl, brass makers and fruit sellers—all crying their wares at once, an unend-

ing change of colouring as brightly dressed peddlers and purchasers move hither and thither; the veiled Mohammedan woman, the delicate "sitt" or lady, the modern flapper with rouged lips and "kohled" eyes, the beggars for "baksheesh," sheikhs wearing the baggy trousers and the elaborate "kafiyees" dropping over the shoulders, "Amaries" or princes with their flowing abias wrapped around their tall, sinewy figures; dukes, beys, paschas, wearing the famous "tarbouche" or fez, set at a rakish angle, priests, bishops, rabbis, fanatics of every creed and belief; a few Americans, some Europeans, and the rest look like the remnant of the Near East Relief.

Above all this comes the dignified form of the patriarch of the Mother Church, gorgeously garbed in a black silk mantle over a costume of Tyrean purple, his towering headgear covered with a black veil reaching below his waist, surrounded by his archmandrites, returning from the Holy Sepulchre after performing some sacred rite.

Gazing upon these throngs day after day, I thought if David should come back to his old city, after a repose of thousands of years, he would, without doubt, recognize his descendants, but would be puzzled to know where in the world, this surging mass of humanity came from.

XXI

FACE TO FACE WITH TWENTY CENTURIES

LEAVING behind the ancient city, enclosed within its walls, our car speeds north to Gethsemane, the Mount of Olives and the Tomb of the Virgin. On our way, we pass the cemetery of the soldiers who fought under Britain's flag in the last Crusade. It is an ideal spot for their last resting place, and was donated by the people of Palestine for the purpose. It contains two sections, one with some 2,756 graves and the other with 3,155, each marked by a marble slab and flowers planted at the base. The cemetery itself is arranged in two tiers, one higher than the other, and well kept. On a platform at the top of the first tier, is the Anglican cross with a sword of bronze running through the center, and at the top of the second is a semicircle of granite with the names of the fallen carved upon it, and in the center a memorial chapel bearing the inscription, " This chapel was erected by the officers and men of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force to the honoured memory of their comrades who fell in the Palestine campaign of 1914–1918. We, therefore, remember you in our prayers as it becometh us to think upon our brethren."

The interior of the chapel was decorated by the New Zealand men in honour of the members of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, who took part in

the Palestine and Sinai operations. The beautiful pictures above the door and the altar are finely done in tiny pieces of mosaic of the softest hues. Above the altar is written, "Their names liveth forever more," and over the door, "from the uttermost parts of the earth." There are, also, four figures representing Hope, Faith, Humanity and Patriotism.

Here, the strange coincidence which occurred during the past war is still related to you by the natives—the story of Jacob F——, a merchant in the city of Jerusalem. The next morning after the arrival of Raschid Pascha, a Turkish governor of that district at the time, he was suddenly attracted to a beautiful young woman whom he saw on the street. Turning to his attendant, he commanded him to follow her and report to him at once. The attendant soon returned with fullest details—she was the wife of Jacob F——, a prominent merchant in the city.

The following day, Jacob received instructions to appear before the Turkish governor and prepare for active service. Instead, Mr. F—— paid a good sum of money and returned to his work. A few days later, he received a second notice to be ready for service, and again redeemed himself with a still larger sum. The third call came, but this time silver nor gold could not save him. Turkish officers were sent, who ordered Mr. F—— to the front. He pleaded for mercy, but there was none. He begged for time to be given, that once more he might behold the faces of his loved ones before his departure; this was also in vain.

Mrs. F——, long awaiting the return of her husband, rushed to the rabbi for advice, as every Jewess would have done. The rabbi grasped the situation at

once, and, knowing that the Turkish governor would mean but harm to her, asked the keeping of the two children, and told her to escape where she might find refuge with the English Red Cross. The young woman started forth with his blessing, cut her hair, dressed as a wandering Ishmaelite, smeared her face with clay so that no one could detect her, and for one long month walked by night and lay in hiding during the day, until at last, with feet cut and bruised, her mantle and headpiece torn by thorns, wearied and worn, she reached the British Red Cross stationed only a few miles from Bagdad. Having told the story of her flight, she asked permission to join the Red Cross and work with them. Shortly after the capture of Bagdad, she was assigned to one of the hospital units, and always followed the English in their march, close to the front.

Meanwhile, the prominent merchant, who had been forced into the Turkish army, was wounded in one of the encounters, and taken prisoner by the English. Later, upon his recovery, he was granted permission by General Allenby to join the British forces. Just before the attack began on Jerusalem, he was again wounded and sent back of the lines to one of the Red Cross hospitals. The nurse who daily cared for his wounds, while passing his cot one afternoon on her tour of inspection, overheard a doleful sound, a sound of distress and groaning, followed by a deep, pathetic sigh; and, thinking she might be of some comfort to the lonely man, drew near, and looking into his pale face, said, "But why sighest thou thus? Art thou not a Britisher and under the protection of the English flag?" "Ah, nay," answered the man. "Would

God that I were an English subject. Up to a short time ago, I was in business in the city of Jerusalem."

She listened with great eagerness, and, before the story was half told, her heart beating fast with undefined mingling of ecstasy and pain, for she had recognized him to be her husband, no longer able to withhold her emotions, she cried with a loud voice, "Ah, me! can this be true—can it be you, Jacob?"

Later, when the Holy City was taken, General Allenby made his official entry on foot. Not a single shot was fired, and, as he passed through the ancient Jaffa Gate, the inhabitants, representing every nation under the sun, thronged the city walls, the market places and the housetops; and among them, to welcome him, was the old rabbi with the two children. But the most impressive feature of the whole affair was that upon entering the gates of Jerusalem, General Allenby, calling his vast hosts about him, said, "As the Master once entered these gates, He knelt in prayer. So let us do likewise."

On the Mount of Olives is the rock from which our Lord ascended into heaven, now in Moslem hands, who have built a low, square building crowned by a dome over it. From the minaret, my secretary took our moving pictures of the view of the Holy City. Two days later, it was felled to the ground by the earthquake, and the old sheikh, who was the keeper, was killed. This view of Jerusalem from Olivet is one of the most beautiful scenes in all the world, particularly as the declining sun casts its rich glow over the city, touching with gold and rose and purple the Dome of the Rock.

From the Mount of Olives we descend to Geth-

semane. Unfortunately, much of its former beauty has been marred by the erection of modern buildings, but, nevertheless, beneath the remaining gnarled olive trees, we feel we are truly on hallowed ground, as we gaze upon those trees that watched the Master's agony, and from whence He began that sorrowful journey to Calvary. To the left of the Garden stands a cathedral, recently erected at a cost of one million and a half dollars, and built over the same rock upon which Christ prayed that the cup might pass from Him. The foundations are of the original rocks. Above the altar are three paintings; the first, Judas betraying Him with a kiss, while the Roman soldiers stand near by, holding the oil flares above His head; the second, the angel holding the cup before Christ, who is in agonizing prayer, with the slumbering disciples seen in the distance; the third, the multitude surrounding Him;—when He said, "I am He," and they went backwards and fell down.

At one time, there was an old Roman temple built over this spot, and in several places in the floor are the original tiles, while several inches above is the present floor, copied in the exact designs. Looking across the Valley of Kedron, we see the east wall of the city, with the Golden Gate, the private entrance of Solomon returning from wars. From the Garden, we descend a few steps to the tombs of Absalom, St. James and Zacharias. They were entirely covered with dirt, but have been excavated and now stand in the center of a Jewish cemetery. Every Jew, in passing the Tomb of Absalom, picks up a stone and throws it against it, thereby showing their contempt for his disloyalty to his father. Yonder are the pools of

Siloam, where at dawn and at eventide the daughters of Israel still come to fill their jars. Retracing our steps, we come to the tomb of the Virgin, a rocky cave, eighty meters below the earth. It is a dark, damp place, filled with the pungent odours of incense and perfumes. The cave is not always open to visitors, but we were admitted by the bishop in charge, who graciously gave me a graphic history of the tomb.

Turning southward, we are soon on our way to Hebron and Bethlehem, passing the Hill of Evil Council; the tree where Judas hanged himself; the Well of the Magi, where the wise men stopped to draw water, and, gazing down into the well, beheld the Star in all its brilliancy. The well still continues to supply its clear, cool water to the passer-by. A little farther on is the rock where Elisha lay down to rest, when escaping from the wicked Jezebel. The plains around are redolent with history—Ruth and Naomi, and David, the shepherd lad, who later composed here many of his famous psalms. Here the shepherds, watching their flocks by night, heard the Glad Tidings.

The pools of Solomon are in a state of perfect preservation, the present water supply of Jerusalem coming from them. Just outside of Bethlehem is the tomb of Rachel, under Moslem control, and then Hebron, a typical Eastern city of fifteen thousand souls, of which only one hundred are Christians. It is superbly situated in a fertile valley surrounded by rocky hills. The hillsides are covered with vineyards, yielding the finest grapes in all Palestine. The inhabitants of Hebron, or, as they still call themselves, "the sons of Abraham," are exceedingly strong, and as brave as they are strong. Each year when they

come into Jerusalem to celebrate a Moslem feast day, they carry the flag of Abraham, guarded by twelve of their most stalwart men. One year, the English determined they should not enter the Jaffa Gate, as was their custom, but should march around to the Damascus Gate. So they placed soldiers at the gate and at the citadel, and machine guns upon the walls. The Hebronites came and, regardless of soldiers and machine guns, marched through the Jaffa Gate. They possess no fear, for their religion is the sword and Mohammed. They firmly believe that if they are killed they immediately return to this life in the soul of another.

The two chief points of interest in Hebron are the Mohammedan mosque built over the Cave of Macpelah, where lie Abraham, Isaac, Sarah and Rebecca; while in a smaller cave Jacob and Leah are buried. The present walls are the identical ones built by Solomon. The supreme Moslem council is becoming very strict about permitting strangers, and especially infidels, to visit the mosque, and very few tourists ever see the interior. As we approach Solomon's entrance, there is a small opening in the rock of the wall. Here the devout Jew throws down his letters to Abraham. On the opposite side of the building is the entrance built by Saladin.

The old men, with long white beards, round turbans and flowing garments, give the appearance of ancient patriarchs just stepped forth from the Bible. At once I thought of the story of the three boys who met an old man with flowing locks. "Good morning, Father Abraham," said the first lad. "Good morning, Father Isaac," greeted the second. "Good morning,

Father Jacob," said the third. The old man looked at them for a moment and then responded, " I am neither Abraham, Isaac nor Jacob. I am Saul sent to fetch my father's asses and behold, I have found them."

Customs in the East have remained unchanged, even since the days when Abraham was obliged to bargain for the Cave of Macpelah. A few years ago, Dr. Schniller wished to secure a certain building in Hebron for a dispensary. He paid a visit to the sheikh who had the property in his keeping, and, after the customary cup of coffee had been drunk, he approached him on the subject of renting the building. The sheikh became quite indignant and would not listen to it, saying, " Are we not the best of friends? Would it become me to take money from my friends? " And so they argued, amid wild gesticulations, until at length the old sheikh replied, " Well, at any rate, what is the small amount of five hundred pounds between two friends? "

At a little distance from the town stands the Oak of Mamre, where the angels visited Abraham as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. It is in the possession of the Anglicans, who have placed a high iron fence about it to prevent visitors from chipping off pieces of the bark. Near by they have erected a new chapel.

The first object one desires to see in Bethlehem is the most sacred spot—the place of the Nativity; for the spell of the Holy Land lies more profoundly over this place, perhaps, than anywhere else. A huge structure is built over it, containing three convents and a church. The church was erected by the Empress Helena in 327 A. D. There is a small door in the

western wall which leads into the basilica, and is the same entrance that the former Kaiser of Germany used when he visited the Church of the Nativity in 1908. The nave is all that now remains of Helena's vast temple. Leaving the nave, we reverently and silently descend into a cave, and there, at the entrance of a winding passage hewn from limestone, is the dimly lighted chapel, containing two small niches. Police are always on duty in the crypt, and, when one leaves and the other takes his place his first office is to make sure that all the gold and silver lamps are still there. In one of the small recesses is a gold star, marking the spot where the Star stood over the manger; and, in the other, is a silver star, denoting the spot of the Nativity. This star was sent from Vienna in 1852, and around it is written in Latin, " Here, Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary." The entire cave is encased in marble, leaving nothing of the original rock. With what indefinable feelings of emotions and overwhelming sense of the divine, do we gaze upon this sacred spot—the spot that will forever demand the silent adoration of the soul.

Below the city are still the fields of Boaz, with the gleaners and the reapers. Near the gate is the famous well of Bethlehem, for whose waters David longed: " Ah, would that one would give me to drink of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate."

XXII

UNTOUCHED BY THE TREND OF MODERN CIVILIZATION

THE plain about the Dead Sea is very desolate, and the ground is covered with an incrustation of salt. It lies thirteen hundred feet below sea level, fifty-four miles from the Mediterranean. You rise at seven o'clock and find your thermometer registering one hundred and twenty-one degrees. The waters of the Dead Sea are exceedingly clear, and anything at the bottom, to a very great distance, may be easily and distinctly seen. It is fifty miles long, and ten miles wide, with the gray mountains of Moab forming the background. All the water of the Jordan empties into the Dead Sea, so called from want of life in and around it. But it contains a vast wealth of mineral substance, and a project is on hand to extract the salt, which is very rich in chemical elements. The density of the water may be realized from the consideration that while the ocean water contains approximately 4.6% salt, the water of the Dead Sea contains 25%. After a careful analysis of its water, it was found to contain calcium carbonate, calcium sulphate, magnesium nitrate, potassium chloride, sodium chloride, magnesium bromide and great quantities of radium.

The River Jordan has nothing to make it especially attractive, beyond the historic associations connected with it—a great contrast to the bright blue waters of

the Dead Sea. Here, Naaman, the leper, came with his company at the request of the prophet Elisha, to dip seven times that he might be healed of his leprosy. As I stood on the banks, my thoughts wandered, and it seemed as though I could almost hear his cry of indignation, "Why have we journeyed hither? Are not Abana and Pharphar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" A little farther up-stream is the spot where Christ was baptized by John. A thrill came over me, and I forgot for the time the rush of the twentieth century; and in fancy could almost hear that celestial voice, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him." On a high promontory, overlooking the sacred spot, is a large Anglican monastery, the original building of which was erected by St. Helena. The Jordan overflows its banks each year, and the country for miles around is inundated. The banks of the river are fringed with tamarisks and oleanders, and the reeds and underbrush form an almost impenetrable mass. The plain of Jericho would be as fertile as the valley of the Nile if it were cultivated, but, owing to the neglect of irrigation during the summer months, it has lost its fertility.

A prominent Jew, graduate of Ann Arbor, is working on a project to make the Jordan the source of all electricity for Palestine. He declares that because of its great rapidity of current, electricity will become cheaper than candles. Pondering on the mighty things of the past, I was reminded of the many absurd questions that I have been asked from the platform regarding the Jordan. A man once wished to know if it were true, what a missionary had told him, that a person must have legs four feet long in order to dip in the

A View of the River Jordan.

Jordan. If such were the case, then I am sure Naaman must have been a giant.

Little remains of old Jericho, that once famous city around which Joshua, with his followers, marched seven times, save a small portion of the old defense wall and a few ruins that have been unearthed. The new Jericho, with its population of fifteen hundred, is located in a rich plain, and has become a famous Palestinian winter resort. The finest bananas in all the world are grown here. On a mountain overlooking the town is a monastery, erected on the spot where Christ spent His forty days tempted by Satan, and just below it is another monastery, of Russian origin, built in the side of the mountain, and almost impossible of access, except by extremely difficult climbing.

The town boasts of several winter hotels, but, unfortunately, the largest one was completely destroyed in the recent earthquake. The life of simplicity that exists among the natives of Jericho is striking. Upon our arrival in the village, every child in the community, in a moment's time, had gathered about us. One day, while driving, a headpiece belonging to a member of our party fell from the car without our notice. Suddenly we were attracted by shouts, and, looking back, saw a young lad racing wildly toward us, waving the "kafiyeh"—headgear. Had it not been for his sense of honesty, he might have kept it as something to be worn on Sunday.

From Jericho, we begin the steep ascent toward Jerusalem; for the Holy City is the starting point of all trips. Passing the city on one side, we speed along northward on an excellent highway, winding through mountains and ravines. Rocks and cliffs are verdant

with grape-vines and orchards of olives and figs, dotting the hillsides everywhere. Entering a narrow defile, we are soon in a place which since early Bible days has been known as the " valley of the robbers." And it is just as dangerous to-day as it was thousands of years ago. My chauffeur had to be on the alert every moment while my moving pictures were being taken, driving cautiously around the sharp promontories projecting out into the road. The whole country, plains and mountains, is full of Biblical lore, and the rapid succession of delightful scenes and sacred objects makes the entire trip a source of unmingled enjoyment, and leaves a picture that lingers enchantingly on memory's screen.

One of the first places of interest is Jacob's well, with its Greek chapel over it, dimly lighted, as we enter, from the powerful rays of the Syrian sun. An attendant lets down a jar, and we drink of those same waters that quenched the Master's thirst, when, after a weary journey, He asked a drink of the Samaritan woman. A light is lowered into the well, and we gain some idea of its depth—measuring thirty-eight meters, with eighteen meters of water in summer and about twenty-two in winter. Near the well, the Moslems have erected a " weli," which they assert is the tomb of Joseph.

A little distance from Jacob's well, is the site of old Samaria, at one time the capital of the kingdom Israel, the city of Ahab and Jezebel. The modern village, called Sebastieh, contains some seventy-five houses. It stands on a broad plateau, on the top of a hill six hundred feet high, and is cultivated from the base to the top, its terraced sides being covered with

wheat, and olive trees. Very little life is visible, and it appears like a city of the dead; but, in its golden days, it must have been a gem of beauty.

Nablus, or the ancient Shechem, one of the refuge cities of Biblical days, is a curious old place and one of the cities of Palestine that has retained its true Oriental atmosphere. It lies in a broad, fertile valley, with numerous streams, filled with waving wheat fields and orchards of fruit. The houses are built of stone, much in general appearance like those of Jerusalem. But here the earthquake of 1927 had left its deepest impress. The old city suffered greatly; houses, mosques, and churches had been cast to the ground. As we approached, we saw camps pitched everywhere, and here a child, or there an old man carrying his bed or leading a lamb. Loss of life in Nablus alone ran into the hundreds, and many were injured.

Soon we beheld the Plain of Dothan, where Joseph was sold by his brothers. The road to Egypt still passes through here, and Arabs, with their caravans, wearing the same dress and carrying the same things to sell, are always passing. I doubt not that, if the shepherds should offer to sell a smart lad to these travelling merchants, they would be just as eager to make a bargain as they were in those far-off days.

The Nazareth of to-day is the same as of two thousand years ago, and you feel the intense reality of everything surrounding it when you first approach the town. The hills, the fields, the streets are the same that the Master knew. In the cool of the evening, the maidens still come to the well to fill their jars and to learn what has transpired during the day. It is still called Mary's Well, and thither the boy Jesus must

have come with his mother at the close of the day to fill her jars and to converse with the daughters of the village. The home of Mary and Joseph, with its little carpenter shop, a church erected over it, is held in great veneration by all. The view afforded from the hill behind the city is one of the finest in all Syria, overlooking the Plain of Esdraelon, taking in the snow-crowned Hermon, the summit of Tabor, with an English church and convent perched upon it, the long ridge of Carmel and, beyond, the blue Mediterranean.

Shortly after leaving Nazareth, the sparkling blue waters of Galilee burst upon the view—this tiny sea, around which is woven so many sublime events in the history of Christ's life. It is six hundred and eighty-two feet below sea level, surrounded by green mountains, from which the winds rush down with great violence and often very suddenly. It contains the finest fish in all the Eastern world. As we begin our descent to Tiberias, the air becomes scorching hot, and, upon arriving there, we find our thermometer standing at one hundred and twenty-nine degrees. There is very little to be seen at Tiberias, but the country on every side speaks of the Master's ministry. The tiny fishing boats dance merrily upon its waves, and the fishermen on the shores still mend their nets as of old. At the edge of the city are the pools of hot sulphur water, the water gushing from the hillside with great speed. Baths are built over them, and they have become famous for the cure of rheumatism, throughout the land.

Skirting the shore of the lake, we pass through a mean little village of mud huts, Magdala—the original home of Mary Magdalene, and then Capernaum, the

city that "was exalted to heaven, but has been cast down to hell." The ruins of the temple are most interesting. Seven centuries ago, it was covered by an earthquake, and remained so until twenty-seven years ago, when it was excavated and the temple area revealed. The ground pavements are the identical stones of the original temple, with the stone seats surrounding the court, and with the sacristy at the rear. Columns delicately carved surrounded the court, of which only three remain standing; but the remnants of broken ones, cupolas and cornices are scattered about in wild confusion. At the rear, on the outside, are visible the stairs which led up to the women's gallery. One of the most conclusive points of its authenticity is the symbol of the Jews—Solomon's star, engraved on every cornice.

In the last twenty-seven years, every religion has attempted to rebuild the temple, but the curse upon Capernaum still lives. Last year Jesuits took it and prepared to build; they had erected their scaffolding and had started the work, when one of the workmen fell and was killed, the architect lost an eye by a falling stone, and several others were severely injured; so they ceased operations, content to let it remain with its prophecy. All about the area were unearthed oil presses, grinding mills and all kinds of cooking utensils and oil flares, showing that the temple was built on a hill, with the city surrounding it. Alas, that a city so favoured and prosperous, the city that King Herod built for his capital, and where Salome danced and asked the head of John, the Baptist, should have such an overwhelming ruin cast upon it.

The questions that confront me concerning my na-

tive land and its people are numerous as to whether the sacred spots connected with the life of Christ are authentic. If we accept the history of the world as it is written, then it becomes our duty to believe what is marked as hallowed ground. Roman emperors, who felt the profound spell of the Holy Land, caused monuments befitting sacred events to be erected on the ground they knew was accurate. But, if these places are not the same, the original ones must have been somewhere near them. It is, indeed, the same setting —the mountains, valleys, the hills, towns, villages, rivers, rocks and tombs that the Master knew, and have become sacred by the tears of thousands that have been shed upon them.

Once a very famous painter, after carefully studying the Scriptures, had a deep desire to paint the Christ as he saw Him in the Word. He worked and worked on the first painting, and, at last, when it was finished, called to his studio the little daughter of his landlord and said, "Marion, what do you think of this picture?" She paused a moment, and then replied, "It looks like a rich man, sir." Realizing that he had failed in his first attempt, he put it aside and sketched another. Calling the child, he said, "Marion, now tell me, what do you think of this one?" "Oh," she exclaimed, "it looks like a wonderful teacher." For the second time, he knew he had not caught the spirit of the likeness of Him. So once more he laid it aside. Taking his Bible, he carefully reread the sublime story, and then made his third portrait. Again calling the little maiden, when she entered the studio, she silently and reverently fell on her knees and worshiped.

XXIII

AT THE SIGHT OF DESOLATION

THE one thing that marred my recent visit to my native land was the terrible earthquake that rocked Palestine from east to west on July 11, 1927, with a damage estimated at nearly one-half million pounds. Old sheikhs declared that it was the worst that the Holy City had experienced in one hundred years. The heart was touched to behold the results and the horror of it: the wreckage of thousands of communities; the destruction of schools, homes and institutions; the damage to ancient and sacred ruins; the desperate struggle of the survivors. Hundreds perished, and everywhere I heard the cry, "Destruction has surely fallen upon El Khuds el Shareef—the Holy City—and the entire land of Judea. Homes were completely destroyed, and terrified people thronged the streets or fled to the hillsides, where they pitched their camps under the shadow of the olive and fig trees. It has been an age-long custom in my country, as winter approaches, to put in store all the necessary provisions for the year—wheat, olives, dates, figs, raisins, butter, olive oil, nuts and many other foods common among the natives. Consequently, this disaster, sweeping the ancient city and Palestine, left the people in dire distress and absolute poverty.

The shock originated in the region of the Dead Sea, and, while it has long been an acknowledged fact

that nothing lives in the region of the Sea, yet at this time it appeared very much alive. In this twentieth century, newspapers, with all their advancements, are not on the alert for tragedies in Palestine. Five days passed before we were able to glean one word about the earthquake, either from the Arabic or the English press, and had to be content to receive the news as it passed from mouth to mouth.

At Jacob's well there was a company of people who had fled from Nablus, with nothing except the clothes upon their backs; their homes were completely demolished. How similar the story of the Master, "Woman, give Me to drink." Here, at the well, these people had the original waters, but, of the necessities of life, they had none. Had this occurred in America or Canada, aid would have been immediately forthcoming; but conditions in Palestine, because of the great influx of people, prevented the government from rendering any aid financially, and these poor distressed Judeans were forced to depend on Him, who once had trodden the hills, who had been tempted and had tasted hunger.

Nablus suffered, perhaps, more than any other place; the material damage was enormous. We were eye witnesses to the destruction there; the whole town was a heap of ruins, with only a few places left standing, and those were badly cracked, and condemned. The inhabitants, gathering together what little they could of their worldly possessions, fled to places of safety outside the city walls, and there pitched their temporary homes. Guards were on duty, and no one was allowed to enter the stricken town. Hundreds were wounded—we saw them on every side; and over two thousand

were engaged in relief work. Temporary hospitals had been fitted up; all were full,—and more begging admission. And I heard the wailing cry as of old, "Woe, woe unto us, the Lord hath surely visited His wrath upon His people."

On a narrow strip of road, hardly wide enough for camels to pass, we came upon an old man, with his family and what he had been able to gather together—his one horse, several camels—journeying on to find another camp; and, pressing them close against the side of the overhanging cliff, he cried out to my chauffeur, in Arabic, "Have mercy, have mercy upon us, my brother. Is it not enough that Allah hath forgotten us? Do not complete the disaster." To which we replied, "Nay, my father, may it all end in peace for you." We passed group after group in the wilderness, walking to far distant places, to ascertain if their relatives and friends were safe. As there was no other means of learning of their welfare—no telegraphs, telephones; and, had there been they would have been of no service, for most of the people could neither read nor write—it, therefore, became necessary to make the journey on foot.

The earthquake had left its marks of tragedy upon holy ground. The Dome of the Rock was badly cracked. For the past several years, repairs had been going on, for which several thousand pounds had been raised by the Islamic world; but all this had been put to naught. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, especially the two large domes and the Greek Chapel, was severely cracked, and for some time no one was permitted to enter the church. Government House, long famous as a landmark since the Empress Augustus

of Germany built it, and which for some time has served as the Palestinian home of Lord and Lady Plumer, suffered intensely. Damage caused at the Hebrew University was estimated at ten thousand pounds. Mosques, churches, minarets, houses and synagogues collapsed, taking with them a huge toll of life.

A curious incident occurred at the School of the Redeemer, within the gates of the old city. The children had been playing on a terrace sheltered by two old walls. Just a few seconds before the shock was felt, the schoolmaster had ordered the children indoors. Scarcely a second elapsed, after they had marched inside, before both walls crashed to the ground. Only one little girl, who had remained outside, was struck by a falling stone and killed.

Several of the leading hotels were ruined, and many condemned. Our hotel, one of the largest and most substantial stone structures, shook like a reed in the wind. The ceilings were cracked and the walls, in some places, sprung apart almost a foot. The salon was in a state of confusion; bric-à-brac, smoking tables and chairs, all lay about in a mass, and many valuable statues were broken into tiny atoms. The shock lasted three seconds, and, had it continued another half-second, we would have been under the ruins. I have often said, if I could live my life over again, I would be willing to face most anything but the terrible disaster and the experience of the Jerusalem earthquake.

People representing every nation on the globe thronged the little post-office, waiting to wire friends and relatives back home that all was well with them. Strange as it may seem, the day previous to the quake

we had dined at the Winter Palace Hotel, Jericho. At the very same hour on the following day, it was completely destroyed, and three princesses from India and several others lost their lives. Some may say, it merely happened so; nay, it was Providence. It took the sufferings of my people to reveal the hidden treasures of the Dead Sea and its untold wealth of chemical elements.

XXIV

THE GREATEST GIFT OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

TO those who know the heart of the East and who have taken more than a passing interest in its great development, intellectually, spiritually, and socially, with its far-reaching results, this story of Syria and its people would be incomplete without a brief glimpse into the great American University of Beirut,—the greatest educational center in the Near East.

We, the Syrians, are indebted to such men as Dr. Daniel Bliss, Dr. Cornelius Van Dyke, and the Hoskins, those brave, adaptable and far-visioned American missionary educators, who were filled with a desire to serve the country in which they cast their lots. They gave of their best to the people for whom they had left their own homes, to instruct in the elementary principles of Western civilization.

The American University of Beirut owes its foundation to Dr. Daniel Bliss. In 1862, he was appointed by the American Mission to build up a school of higher learning in Syria. In 1864, the legislature of New York granted a charter, which provided for the development of the Syrian Protestant College; and, in 1866, it was opened with sixteen pupils in a rented house. To-day, it is beautifully situated on a campus overlooking the Mediterranean, having twenty-six large and seventeen small stone buildings, a faculty of

one hundred and ninety-nine, of whom one hundred are native teachers, and a student body of fifteen hundred, representing twenty-five nationalities and fifteen religious sects. The graduates of the university have organized twenty alumni associations, and are scattered over the world. They are among the leaders of education, journalism, health, government, and finance in the countries of the Near East—Syria, Persia, Palestine, Egypt, Arabia, Iraq and the Islands of the Ægean Sea; while not a few are to be found in the United States and in South America.

The University has its own observatory, library, which contains some thirty thousand volumes, scientific laboratories, X-ray clinics, and hospitals, as well as literary, musical and dramatic clubs, and a monthly magazine and its own printing press. Its archæological museum contains a splendid collection of antiquities gathered from Syria, Egypt, Cyprus and Palestine.

In 1902, after forty years of active service, Dr. Daniel Bliss resigned as president, and his son, Dr. Howard Bliss, succeeded him. In 1920, Dr. Bliss died, and three years later Dr. Bayard Dodge was appointed his successor. In November, 1920, the charter was amended and the name changed to the American University of Beirut. Were those stalwart men, who fostered this great seat of learning, living to-day, I am sure they would smile contentedly at the results of their untiring efforts. The tender little shoot, which they so carefully planted and watched over, has grown into a mighty tree—like the Cedars of Lebanon, and is now strong enough to weather the elements.

The University is undenominational, having been developed through private bequests, and is as non-

sectarian as Columbia or any of our state universities. It serves as a connecting link between the East and the West. Its purpose is not to Americanize its students, but rather to stimulate them to develop their own culture; it is not to proselytize, but rather to awaken a spirit of brotherhood between members of hostile sects. It has an enrollment of six hundred and one non-Christians, who are encouraged to maintain respect for all that is uplifting in their own religions. Chapel is conducted each morning, Sunday included, and, following the American principle of religious liberty, students of various sects who do not wish to attend the common worship are permitted to attend what is called an "alternative service," held in West Hall and centering about helpful talks.

The new automobile route, recently completed across the Mesopotamian Desert, via Palmyra, has made it possible for hundreds of students from Iraq and Persia to register. Eighteen boys are being educated by King Feisal of Iraq, and six by the Prince Regent of Abyssinia; the government of Palestine is educating six boys and one girl, and the Sudanese government two boys. These young people, when they have completed their university training, will return to their native countries, where a rare leadership confronts them. Many members of the conservative Moslem nobility and other royal houses, never before reached by a foreign institution, are sending their sons, for the first time, to a Christian college.

Co-education was established at the university in 1922, and the first Moslem woman to enroll was in 1926. She was from Egypt and was the first woman to unveil in Cairo. This is the only institution in the

southern part of the Near East that offers a university training to women. The Rockefeller Foundation was so impressed with the opportunities of medical educators at Beirut and the splendid character of the medical school that it has granted a fund of $25,000 a year, for the next five years; and, just before I left Syria, it had also given $10,000 a year during the next two years for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a public health center in connection with the out-patient department.

As I witnessed the commencement exercises, last year, when ninety-four graduates took their diplomas, and heard them answer to the oath administered by President Dodge, I keenly felt the loyalty, spirit of thoroughness, and manliness of these young people, and realized that the unique value of this great center lies in its emphasis on character building as the foundation of education; it stands for the best gift of the West to the East. It is like the sun, sending its rays into the remote corners of the Near East.

XXV

AMONG THE DWELLERS OF THE WILDERNESS

ONE of the most impressive sights that greets the eye of the traveller in Palestine, is the nomadic tribes of the Ishmaelites, or, as they proudly call themselves, "Owlad-el-Arab"—Sons of the Arabs. We recall that Abraham had two sons: Ishmael, the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, the bond servant of Sarah, his wife; and Isaac, his own beloved son. It was through Isaac that the succeeding generations were to have their origin, providing he took to wife a Syrian, one of his own people. The unfortunate Ishmael was cursed and driven into the wilderness. "Thou shalt call his name Ishmael . . . and he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him" (Genesis 16: 11, 12). Down through the generations, this curse has followed them, even to the Bedouins, Ishmael's descendants.

They are a wandering people, dwelling in tents, leading their camels, flocks and cattle from pasture to pasture and from stream to stream. They are unique figures, mounted on their stalwart steeds, with the elaborate trappings, wrapped in their flowing mantles. They are noted for their remarkable horsemanship and for their warlike spirit. They proudly boast that they have never passed under the sway of another power since the days of Ishmael, a readily accepted state-

A Typical Ishmaelitish Tent.

ment when one considers that they speak no other language but the purest of Arabic.

But the deep-seated emnity which began between Jacob and Esau has never been healed, but still rankles in the bosoms of their descendants. These sons of the desert are greatly feared, for their main occupation is attacking and robbing all whom fate brings across their path—an immemorial custom and one that they regard as quite legitimate. They will rob you of all you possess, but are always careful not to take a life. But, in spite of this feature of desert life, they have a deep sense of hospitality. A guest is honoured and, indeed, is considered most sacred. I shall never forget my visit to the tent of the sheikh of one of the tribes. At once, upon our arrival, he set his women to pounding coffee, killed the choicest of his sheep, and gave orders for a sumptuous repast to be brought before us. The tribe became a seething mass of humanity as they hurried hither and thither in the preparation of it; and, there in the silent wastes of the desert, we "broke bread" together, and partook of a feast that seemed the most delicious we had ever tasted.

It is a surprising fact that, while they are uneducated, scarcely one among them being able to read or write, yet, they possess a keen understanding of politeness and a natural sense of protection. A stranger, be he friend or foe, may ride to the emir's (prince's) tent at any hour, and ask for food or shelter, and it is never denied him. They have no laws or regulations of life, and their form of government is simple. Each tribe has its own prince or sheikh, who is the leader of his people, and, when searching for new pastures, he generally rides ahead and chooses the location.

While spending several weeks last fall on the border of the desert, my water-carrier was one of those care-free, whole-hearted Ishmaelitish women. My secretary offered to pay her five Syrian pounds a month, which was equivalent to sixteen piasters a day, but, after considerable thought, she replied, "Oh, no, that is not enough money; I must have, at least, five piasters a day."

They lead a very simple life, these sons of the desert. Their world is only their camels, their flocks and their tribes. They have no books, no newspapers, no games of any kind; and thereby never come in contact with the outside world. They are intensely religious, but how could they be otherwise; for, when Hagar was driven into the solitary wilderness, there was no one but Allah and nature to look up to.

The strong tie of friendship among the Bedouins is to eat salt together, which they believe binds two men together with an iron band. The story is told of an Englishman who fell into the hands of Ishmaelitish robbers. He sensed that his life and possessions were in great danger. Instantly, he took from his pocket a small box and began to eat from it. The sheikh became interested, and, coming close, looked into the box and saw a fine white powder. Never having seen salt except in rock-like forms, and desirous of knowing what his prisoner ate so greedily, he took a bit and put it into his mouth. But, to his great astonishment, it was salt;—hence, he had bound himself to treat his captive as an honoured guest, for he had made "the covenant of salt" with him.

The Arabs have preserved an age-long custom. In every home where there is a son, that son, before he

reaches his twelfth birthday, must become a poet. Should it so happen that the sense of the poetic has not manifested itself before that time, the boy is taken by members of his tribe and put to death. It came to pass that the son of the ruling sheikh had approached his twelfth year and had shown no inclination toward poetry. The verdict came that he must die. Now this son was the apple of his father's eye; so the prince called into consultation his viziers. They decided to give the boy a few more days, but agreed that he should be placed in solitary confinement. Accordingly, they led him to an upper room, overlooking a spring, where the maidens came to fill their jars. One morning, while gazing out of the window, he beheld a beautiful maid coming to the well. Glancing up, she caught his eye, and, becoming confused, fell and dropped the jar, breaking it into pieces. The soul of the lad was awakened, and, leaning out of the window, he cried in words of poetic beauty:

"Thou hast purposely broken thy jar
And its water has sweetened the earth.
My soul crieth out to Allah—
Would that I were the dust of that earth."

The Ishmaelites, from infancy, believe in many superstitions—not the passing-beneath-the-ladder kind, nor the number 13, however. They have a horror of the power of the evil eye, for they assert that there are certain people who bring evil to those they look upon, and it is those who have blue eyes that are the most avoided. To prevent any harm befalling them, you will see placed somewhere on their person, around their necks, in their turbans, or in a woman's

veil, some kind of charm, either a string of blue beads or a single bead. Upon their steeds are numerous adornments of blue beads to protect the animals from harm. One day, driving out of Hebron, we met an Ishmaelitish girl with her jar, going to a near-by well to draw water. They regard it a most unlucky happening to meet anyone, starting forth upon a journey with an empty jar; hence, it is customary to break the jar so as to turn aside the ill omen. But this little girl immediately jerked it from her shoulder and placed it upside down on her head, that the mouth might be covered.

The daughters of Hagar are easily distinguished from those of Sarah. With their long, loose gowns of dark blue or black material, the striking girdles bound about their waists, and their wide, flowing sleeves, they are striking characters, as they move slowly and gracefully along the crowded thoroughfares; bearing their heavy burdens on their heads and their babes tied in hammock-like affairs upon their backs. They wear their hair in long braids, usually twined with chains of coins, and about their necks are coins or tiny bells. These are, generally, heirlooms, and have been handed down from their ancestors, and are considered very sacred. One of the most picturesque sights is the water-carrier. She walks erect under her heavy water jar, rattles the brass cups from which her customers drink, and calls out, "*Mah barid, mah tieb ya ain—mah barid, mah tieb ya ain*"—"cool water, delicious water."

Girls among these tribes of the desert are promised at fourteen and married soon after, the young man not being allowed to see his bride till the night of the wed-

The Young Mother.

ding or the morning after the marriage. This has been a prevailing custom among them and has kept a strong foothold there. A daughter who dishonours her marriage vows is put to death by the hands of the men of her own family. If a young man is too poor to buy a wife, he may work for the girl's father for seven years, even as Jacob served for Rachel. When I told this some time ago to the boys at Camp Travis, Texas, a young American shouted from the back of the house, "This is six years too long."

"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days," is a maxim that is closely adhered to among the wandering Arabs. Thus runs an old Arab tale: A famous emir, whose greatest desire was to study the character of his own people, often went about plainly dressed and mingled with them. So, one day, he made up his mind to go alone into the far-off desert, and walked on and on until he came to the tents of a neighbouring tribe. There he stopped and asked for shelter, but was told he would do better to make the most of the daylight for his journey, and reach the next encampment before dark. So on and on he went, until he came to a poor little tent, old and torn, with a camel grazing beside it.

As he came within sight, the owner noticed him and immediately called to his wife, "Rebekah, here comes a guest. Go at once and prepare for him." "Alas," she answered, "we have nothing but a little meal. Give the stranger a drink and tell him there is a good camp a little farther on."

Let me say right here that the poor Bedouin had at one time been the sheikh of his own tribe, and renowned for his hospitality. He had friends every-

where, and all of them, when travelling, would plan to pass near his camp and enjoy his generosity. He ended by giving away all that he had. At last, when the days of poverty came, many of his friends melted away, and now he and his wife and the camel were alone. Nevertheless, he was very angry at his wife and cried, "Shall we bring the curse of Allah upon us by sending a guest from the door? Have we not enough meal for a cake or two, and the camel, to furnish the supper?" But the poor woman wept bitterly and said, "What shall we do without our camel; how shall we carry our tent and our saddle-bags; and where shall we get our milk? Truly, the camel is all our living." "Do as I tell you," he continued. "Allah, who has sent the guest, will provide for the supper and supply all our needs."

The camel was then killed and the supper prepared, and they spread a bed for the stranger. After they had sat talking, long into the moonlight, the prince slept well. The next morning, the old sheikh urged him to stay, but he said he must find his way back to town, and thanked them both for their kind hospitality, and said, "If you should ever be in need of anything, or should you want a favour from the Emir (Prince), go to town and take this paper with you. He will understand; he will know from whom it comes, and will admit you to his presence."

When the guest had gone, they ate all that was left, and got on as best they could, but, sad to say, became poorer and poorer, till at last the sheikh, though most unwilling to ask a favour of anyone, saw that the only thing for him to do was to go to the prince and ask his help. So he went to the city and presented himself

at the palace. "You cannot see the Emir," said the doorkeeper. "He is not here; he has gone to the mosque to pray." As he sat at the gate, waiting for the return of the prince, I can just imagine he must have said to himself, "How strange that a man who possesses everything under the sun should find it necessary to ask God for anything."

Presently, the doorkeeper said, "See, here he comes. You had better go and meet him. Then you can make your petition in the road without troubling him at the palace."

The Bedouin went, expecting to meet a procession of horsemen and servants, and a prince royally dressed; but passed no one on the road except a humble-looking man, with his arms folded, his head bowed and his eyes to the ground. Thinking that he had made a mistake by taking the wrong turning, he was ashamed to go back to the palace, but went home and told his wife he had had no success. And the days of poverty increased upon them.

Meanwhile, from day to day, the prince had expected the sheikh would hasten to profit by such an opportunity to amend his fortunes; yet the time went on and on, and he never came. "Truly, his pride is great," said the Emir, "and he is yet a great sheikh in his heart. It needs be that I go to him." This time he set forth in state, taking his tents, provisions, camels, cattle and servants, and all the sons of the desert came to see just where the prince, who had probably come to the desert to hunt, would pitch his camp. They were astonished, however, when he stopped at the tent of the ruined sheikh and had his camp pitched near by, and the camels tethered and the provisions unloaded.

That evening, when the dinner was ready, the Emir sent for the poor man to dine with him. Upon his arrival, he was surprised to recognize his former friend, but not at all overwhelmed by such an honour. Indeed, he was more than delighted when the prince said, "I have come to return your hospitality which you showed me in my need. Now, let us eat together." The next morning, when the prince made his departure, he took with him, for his journey, only his favourite horse and two servants, and left everything for the old sheikh, who became once more a great man, and showed hospitality to all comers.

XXVI

FOLLOWERS OF THE PROPHET

IN interpreting the peoples of Syria, I must not overlook the Mohammedans. According to their historians, the Prophet Mohammed first visited Syria when a boy of twelve years, and his second visit was when he was a young man of twenty-five; and it was then that he determined to make the Holy Land the seat of Islam and the country of his followers. The teachings of Islam, meaning "submission," are to be found in the Koran, their sacred book. They declare that God has given "to Moses the first five books of the Bible, to David the Psalms, to Jesus the Gospels, and to Mohammed, the greatest of all the prophets, He gave the Koran." The Koran emphasizes three points: prayer, fasting and alms-giving, and many of its doctrines are worth noting.

A faithful Moslem must kneel five times a day toward the south, in response to the call to prayer. The muezzin, or priest, climbs to the top of the minaret and, with his face toward Mecca, begins his rich, yet plaintive notes, his first intonation—"*Allah—who—ackbar, La hada illa Allah, Wa Mohammed resool 'Allah.'*"—"Allah is great, I testify; there is no God save Allah and Mohammed is the prophet of Allah. Come to prayer." This done, he slowly and reverently follows the railing of the minaret, his voice floating to the four quarters of the sky and then dying into

silence. The hours for prayer are just a little before dawn, at the turn of noon, in the afternoon about three-thirty, at sunset, and two hours after sunset. But the call of the muezzin that makes an indelible impression upon one's soul is the one just before dawn. Time and again I have risen just as the East began to have its first dull rays of gold, and looking out of my window, have seen the minarets rising ghost-like against the horizon. Then, in the calm and stillness, the call is the sweetest ever heard. It is sublimely rich, and creates a deep, strange thrill, for the singer's soul is bursting with an ecstasy of religious emotion.

In Hollywood, California, while attending a reception one evening, a friend of mine, who was a prominent Shriner, asked me to repeat the Mohammedan call to prayer. He was somewhat familiar with it, but wished to hear it from the lips of a native. Slowly I began—*" Allah who ackbar, La hada illa Allah, Wa Mohammed resool ' Allah.' "* I went over it several times for him and he listened attentively. Suddenly he pulled a five-dollar bill from his pocket, threw it upon the table and said, " Thus we cry in this country, ' Allah who ackbar, La hada illa Allah—wa—wa ——' " then a long pause, with his hand still covering the bill. " Ah," I interrupted, " I understand. You mean in America we cry Allah and the dollar, while the Moslem calls Allah and Mohammed."

We often associate the Mohammedan women with the " hareem," meaning " the forbidden—enclosed within the veil." Some time ago, I was amused at the curiosity of a friend, in regard to the sultan and his many wives, their manner of life in the hareem, and so on. I told her that the sultan had an attendant

whose chief business it was to discover for him the most beautiful women in the country, to bring to the palace their photographs and a description of their beauty; and, if the sultan was impressed, then they were bought as wives. "Then," responded my friend, "oh, dear me, I must never go to Syria, or live anywhere near it, for he would be sure to want me for his wife." Indeed, the condition of the Moslem woman in former days was an unhappy one. It was a rigid law that she must be veiled and shrouded like a phantom of the night. I shall never forget one Saturday afternoon at the American school, when two Mohammedan women called to see the dean. While they were waiting in the reception hall, one of the professors happened to pass through, and, instantly, the women arose, turned their faces to the wall; and, in less than the twinkling of an eye, their veils were let down.

Flirting did not originate in America, and flappers must have been numerous in the days of Mohammed. "Do not prevent your women from coming to the mosques, but it is better to keep them at home," said the prophet. Again, he said, "Speak to the women that they refrain their eyes, and display not their ornaments except to their husbands."

But many changes have taken place in the Islamic world. The costume of the Moslem woman has undergone a great reformation. The majority of the common class still wear the flowing, bulky "izzars," but the better class wear the neat "habras," made of the richest kinds of material, the smartest of veils, and the tight-fitting turbans, bound by a black cord, forming a picturesque and decidedly attractive dress. They are taking part, more and more, in public affairs, but, in

most instances, the veil is yet retained. However, the modern Moslem is awaiting the slightest opportunity to discard the veil, and, whenever the occasion presents itself, she pauses to chat with men upon the street corners. This change is keenly felt and regretted by the conservative class; for, in conversation with a prominent Moslem, he said, "Marriages are not so easily made as in former days, for a man must show every discretion in choosing a wife under such prevailing conditions." Only among the common class, is the custom still retained of marrying more than one wife; and women, in spite of conflicting stories, are upheld and respected among them. Divorces are also becoming less numerous.

These radical changes have all taken place since Turkey became a republic, with the social and religious reforms which are contrary to the teachings of the Koran. Mustapha Kemal Pascha has done much to obliterate the ancient Mohammedan customs. He abolished the Caliphate and limited the saying of prayers to one day a week—Friday, the Moslem Sabbath. Many of the once-famous mosques are now deserted, and some of them have been converted into schools. This does not mean, however, that these new laws have found favour in all the Moslem world. Many places still adhere closely to their former modes of life. In early days, the majority of Moslems, especially among the elders and sheikhs, wore the long beards. One of Kemal Pascha's first decrees was that beards must be shaved. If any were found unshaven, they were fined according to the length of them—if the beards were long, the fine was five pounds, if medium, three pounds, and if short one pound.

Freedom has been granted for intermarriage between Moslems and Christians, and, three months before my departure for America, Kemal Pascha issued a statement that the country was opened to all missionaries who wished to enter for spreading the Gospel; and Moslems are free to accept any religion, so long as it does not conflict with the government. Public dance halls, showing all the latest dance hits, have been opened, and all private dancing has been forbidden.

But many of the old conservative homes still cling to their old manners and ideals. Matchmaking among them remains unchanged. An intimate friend of mine, the wife of a prominent Moslem official, had a marriageable daughter. For two months she was besieged with women matchmakers, who visited her home in groups of ten, to ascertain the girl's charm and virtues, and to ask the hand of a single maiden. The latticed balconies are everywhere evident, from which women may look out upon the passing world. They are still kept in seclusion, not permitted to mingle with any, save of their households.

The teaching of the Prophet Mohammed has strictly forbidden the use of strong drinks. I was greatly amused, while dining with a member of my family who belongs to the priesthood of the Mother Church. Among the guests was a Moslem, and, as is the Eastern custom, wine, both red and white, made from the famous Syrian grapes, was offered. But the official, being faithful to the teachings of the Koran, declined the proffered glass. The bishop insisted, telling him that the wine had been made in our own family and was very old, and, if he took a drink, no one would be the wiser. Having tasted it, he cried out, " Mashallah,

if Mohammed himself had ever tasted this wine, he would never have forbidden the use of it."

The Mohammedans are very clannish; in fact, they are always ready to do anything and everything for the help of each other.—" An old sheikh was once invited to a French home to dine with a few friends. The *pièce de résistance* of the dinner was roast turkey. Just as the maid had placed it on the table, a beggar happened to pass by who invoked charity. The sheikh, finding no one about, immediately took the whole turkey and passed it out of the window to the beggar, with the remark, 'All Moslems are brothers.' The hungry guests were somewhat amazed, but, not long after, they were all deeply interested in a discussion which arose as to whether in the next world the credit for the disposal of the turkey would be granted to the old sheikh who gave it to the beggar, or to the host who had paid for it."

From the days of the Amaries (Princesses), stories and traditions have been accurately preserved, which read like the Arabian tales of *A Thousand and One Nights,* and which are equally as thrilling.

Emir Fakh-er-din married the daughter of an aristocratic Moslem family in Accra. Now he was very small of stature, while his wife had six brothers who were exceedingly tall, typical giants; and, when they would stand together, Fakh-er-din came only to their shoulders. In my country, a small man is not often looked upon with favour. The six brothers were continually chiding the young bride about her little husband, and at last determined to take her away from him.

One night, Fakh-er-din returned to find the eyes of

his beautiful bride red from weeping, and, when he questioned her concerning the cause, she tried in every way to evade the real answer. Refusing to accept her stories, he pressed her closely, and she at last revealed the true cause. So he took her and fled to Deir-el-Kamar, the seat of his government, and declared, "In the name of Allah, I shall build me a palace in Deir-el-Kamar, every stone of which shall be brought from Accra." He called his soldiers, selected all who were small like himself, marched against Accra, captured it, and killed his wife's six brothers. Then he commanded each one of his soldiers to take a stone from the walls of Accra and carry it to Deir-el-Kamar, a distance of about twenty-five miles. To-day may still be seen the palace that he swore to build from the stones of the walls of Accra.

When the famous Emir (Prince) Beschir Chehhab governed, the country enjoyed a period of peace and public security. He enforced rigidly the laws regarding the protection of womanhood. Several incidents occurred during his régime that are worthy of notice. One evening a poor woman, who sold milk and leben (a favourite dish made from pure milk and a yeast of its own kind) for a living, while passing through a forest, was approached by a soldier of the Emir's, who asked of her the pail of leben she was carrying. Thinking he would pay her for it, she readily consented; but, to her dismay, after eating it, the soldier passed on his way without an offer to pay. Immediately, the woman carried the case to the Emir. While questioning her, he would repeatedly ask if she were sure it was one of his soldiers, and to which she would always reply in the affirmative.

The Prince, with the wisdom of Solomon, said: "Remember, woman, this is a matter of life and death. We will assemble my troops, and, if you can point out to me the man who committed the wrong, he shall be put to death. But if, after he is shot, no trace is found of the leben in his stomach, then you, likewise, shall be killed." Accordingly, the trumpet was sounded and the soldiers assembled. The woman pointed out the one who had stolen her leben, and Emir Beschir commanded that he be shot. He then examined the stomach and found the leben still undigested.

While visiting in Lebanon last summer, I was guest of one of the direct descendants of Emir Beschir, and, during my visit, we discussed the reign of that eminent Prince and many events which history has neglected to record. It was my pleasure to see the great sword, around which so much romance is woven, and which always accompanied him on his campaigns and conquests; and I was delighted when the young Emir presented me with a complete history of it.

On one side of the sword, with its battered and broken edges, is the golden image of the Virgin Mary, and written beneath it in ancient Russian, this prayer, "In thee I put all my trust, thou Mother of the Lord; clothe me, I beseech thee, with thy Holy garment." On the other side is the cross, with the crucified Christ upon it, and above it is written, "In the Cross the Church began her work and in the Cross she puts her trust and expectation." Beneath the cross are these words, "In the Cross we begin our deeds and in the Cross we hope to seal them. The Cross defends humanity and is the glory of the Church. It is the

The Picture Sword.

pride of angels and confounds Satan. Oh, thou Holy Cross, be thou my strength and my protector. Destroy my enemies and keep me under the shadow of thy might."

The history of the sword dates to the early days of Russia, when Ivan, the Great, was the Czar, and to whom the sword belonged. The general of the Austrian armies, paying an official visit to the court of the Czar, met, and won the love of, the beautiful daughter of Ivan. On the night of their nuptials, the Czar bestowed upon the general his most precious possession —the famous sword, with these words, " My son, I have no greater gift to offer you than this sword, which belongs to the early centuries of Russia. On one side is the face of the Virgin, and on the other the Holy Cross. It will triumph over every enemy if the bearer, when putting it on, repeats the prayers that are written upon it. Take it and gird thyself." In silence the general accepted the priceless gift, reverently placed a kiss upon the face of the Virgin, and replied, " My father, I shall never dishonour your request. Verily, thou shalt hear of my deeds. And I vow it shall never pass, only to a hero who is greater than I in wars and in peace."

In 1797, when wars and bloodshed were ravaging Europe, Napoleon, at the head of the French army, marched across the Alps, entered Italy and subdued the armies of the Austrians. He attacked Manteau with such vehemence that the Austrian forces, unable to hold out, finally surrendered. The general in command of the city was none other than the one who had married the beautiful daughter of the Czar Ivan. In order to protect the walls of the fortress, he took

the precious sword and sent it to Napoleon, with these words: "I have made an oath that I would never surrender this sword but to a hero who was greater than I in wars and in peace. Behold, to-day I have found that hero. Take thou the sword and enter the city triumphant."

During the next two years, Bonaparte carried his campaigns into Egypt and Syria. In 1799, with his forces, he unsuccessfully attacked the city of Akka. His soldiers were dying from disease and hunger, and, almost in despair, he began to search for a confederate among the Syrians, who would bring aid to him and who would assist in his conquests. Hearing of the Lion of Lebanon, Emir Beschir Chehhab, he sent to him the historic sword accompanied by this letter: "Behold, this day I send unto you the sword which was surrendered to me by the brave defender of the fortress of Manteau. Take it, O Prince, as a token of my esteem and friendship. Hasten thou to me with thy forces that I may conquer Akka and we will proclaim thee King of Lebanon."

The Emir kept the sword, but returned this message: "I shall come to you with my men, when you have possessed Akka." Here, for the first time, Bonaparte had experienced bitter defeat.

Down through the years, with their joys and their adversities, this glorious sword has come from family to family of the great Emir Beschir, to whom it has always been known as the "picture sword." As you gaze upon it, you are conscious of an indefinable thrill —the sword that has witnessed the greatest battles on the fields of Europe, Egypt, Turkey, Syria and Lebanon.

XXVII

BEHIDJA, A MODERN EGYPTIAN

"But there is neither East nor West,
Border, nor breed, nor birth,
When two strong men stand face to face,
Though they come from the ends of the earth."

THE words of Kipling are well illustrated in the story of Behidja El-Bakry, an Egyptian Moslem, and Captain D—— of the British Air Force. The El-Bakry family is one of the prominent and outstanding Moslem families, and are the direct descendants of the Arab, Abou Bakr, the first Caliph of Islam and the first to follow Mohammed. The Prophet, later, married Eisha, the daughter of Abou Bakr.

Behidja was born in Cairo of a Circassian mother, and at the age of seven was married to an Egyptian many years her senior, with whom she lived only three months. Seven years later she was divorced from him. After leaving her husband, the child, for she was nothing more, entered a private school for girls, to complete her education. There, having an opportunity to study life, she fully determined never to remarry.

Leaving the school when her course was finished, she returned to her father's home and to the strict life of seclusion; for her father kept the Islamic laws

most rigidly. No one can fully understand what this life means, until they have come in contact, as I have, with women and girls of the conservative Moslem household. She was like a bird in a cage, kept within the walls and the veil, and looking out upon the world only through latticed windows, yearning for the glittering life of the outside. Whenever they would ask their father's permission to go out, he would invariably reply, "There is the garden; go walk there and get the fresh air."

But Behidja was one of those keen-minded, vivacious Orientals, and to her mother she would confide her longings and her dreams. The life she was obliged to lead grew irksome, until finally she could stand it no longer. She and her sisters would arrange weeks ahead with the servants to let them in and out at night through the servants' entrance; on condition, of course, that the large bribe was forthcoming beforehand. They would make an excuse of visiting the modiste or the hair-dresser. Taking the car, they would drive to a secluded spot and, leaving it in charge of the chauffer, would hasten to a European friend's home; and there come in contact with the outside world, and discuss life, its pleasures and its difficulties, over the coffee cup.

Or, getting a group of girls, they would pick up some boys and conceal them under a rug in the bottom of the car, and, with veils tightly drawn, would drive to a certain hotel where a ball was on. And there, going to the manager's room, behind the lattice, with their cigarettes and coffee, would watch the life they yearned to follow. Returning at a late hour, they would remove their shoes and creep stealthily to their

rooms, and none would be the wiser but the trusty servants.

But things were soon to change for Behidja and fortune was to smile upon her; in a far different manner, however, from what she had ever dreamed. One evening in 1918, attending the cinema with a friend of the family, she saw and was introduced to Captain D——. Captain D—— had first visited Egypt in 1911, with his father, who was then aide-de-camp to the Duke of Connaught. He had then caught the real spell of the Old Land and its glorious temples.

When the World War broke, he was among the first to enlist in the flying corps, and, when he had obtained his captaincy, he was sent to Cairo with the English. After the introduction, he and Behidja met many times at the home of this friend, and there he would tell her of life in other countries. Their friendship rapidly ripened into love—but he was a Christian and she was a Moslem, an almost insurmountable barrier. She carried her secret to her mother, and so successfully pleaded her cause that, at length, her mother told her if she truly loved him to cast aside the Moslem laws and marry him. In 1919 they were married—a wedding that set all society in every land whispering.

Captain D—— had returned to London and she was to join him there. She and her sister arrived in the British capital on the night the Armistice was declared, and for six months were guests of his family, and, for the first time, seeing, tasting and enjoying the thrills of modern life. Her father knew nothing of the purpose of her visit, but inferred that she was with friends. The date of their wedding had been fixed,

and Behidja had visited the Bishop to become one of their faith; but, because she could not understand many of the teachings and would not accept them until she did, the Bishop refused to marry them. Another unforeseen obstacle confronted them.

But the ties of love are often like iron bands, and Captain D—— delayed but little. Hastening to the Mosque in London, in the presence of the Supreme Moslem Council, he took his vows and became a brother, pledging his undying loyalty and faith to Islam. They were then married by the Moslem priest, with all the notables among the British and Egyptian Moslems present.

When they returned to Cairo, her father was so embittered and enraged that he refused to meet them. One day he came unexpectedly into the room where Captain D—— was; and the Captain, every inch a courteous gentleman, rose and advanced to proffer the customary salutation—that of kissing the hand. But the father only offered the tips of his fingers, an insult that Behidja felt keenly. She vowed never to enter the house again. They prepared an elaborate house-boat on the Nile, and there, to the accompaniment of the water swishing against the sides, learned to read and understand the hearts of each other. There the mother, almost heart-broken, came, bringing gifts that only a mother's love would think of. Upon her marriage, Behidja's income had been promptly cut off, leaving them only the salary of Captain D——, which was barely enough to supply the wants of one, to say nothing of the desires of her, who had been accustomed to every luxury.

Some time later, the favourite sister of Mrs. D——

came to visit them, and was taken seriously ill. When the father learned of it, his pride and spirit were broken. He came to see what was needed, and from that time on they became fast friends. Four months later, the mother died, and, with a lonely heart, the father begged them to return to the big house, or as it is known, " the white house." For five years, their life was filled with happiness; the father and the husband had become inseparable. And often the father would say to Behidja, " Although he is a Christian, he is a good man. Remember, my daughter, he left his religion for you." He died with the name of Captain D—— upon his lips, and calling, " My son, my son! "

XXVIII

THE PICTURE ON MEMORY'S SCREEN

VERILY, centuries have swept over thee, O my native land, and thou hast slumbered in humiliation and injustice. Nations have trampled upon thy rights and no longer gather in thy courts to praise thee. From age to age, the flag of the invader has waved upon thy battlements, and they have been enriched from thy treasures; from the days of old to the present generation, the heavy yoke of servitude has never been removed. Upon thy head thou didst hold the Glittering Light, but in the tempests of conflicts they have put it out. How long, O thou Strength, will thy wrath be poured out upon thy people and the Holy Land? How long shall we mourn for Damascus and weep sorrowfully over Lebanon? We cry unto Thee with burning hearts and with souls torn with anguish for our national misfortune. We shall go on dreaming the greatest of all dreams—the sublime dream of the resurrection of a nation!

Ah! would that I could carry my readers across the seas, to that sacred land of Palestine, to share with me the beauties and glories of my native home; as we wander among holy places and ponder on the grand things that have transpired here, to give you a glimpse of that little land, where the greatest drama of all mankind has been enacted. Then, memory brings up

the history of the mighty past, as we follow the paths where prophets have trod, and traverse the ancient highways, which shall forever remain memorable and beautiful. Then we would feel the deep charm of that chosen spot which has so closely connected itself with Heaven, and understand more fully the meaning of the Psalmist's songs; then our feelings would bear witness that the spirit of Jehovah, which revealed itself to our forefathers on Mount Sinai and at the Jordan, still illumines our souls.

You are bewildered by the mystery and splendour of the varied scenes of this enchanted land, and become more impressed that Palestine is, indeed, a living place —" a land flowing with milk and honey,"—a land that watched the Master's agony as He worked His redemptive way from Bethlehem to Calvary, where He spoke His parting benediction of love and peace, where He opened to His friends the Gate of the Tomb, into a life eternal, beneath the Syrian stars.

When I look back to ages that have passed,
And see, how in the desert's heart a flower you were
Indeed, the only blooming one. With tears I ask
Where is your former power? Where is your glory and your world-wide fame?
Alas! all gone! A ringing bell you were, and summoned nations to their God,
But heard no more, since from your height you fell.
Where are your Peters and your Pauls and Johns?
Oh, Land of Moses, thou my fatherland.
Where are your prophets and your famous men?
Where are your Daniels, who alone dared stand?
My patriotic heart bleeds for your fallen state,
But with a faith more firm than Lebanon

Thy glorious mount, I desire and hope and pray
That God, Almighty, soon will push thee on.

Thus, do I seal the pages of my book, with our ancient Syrian salutation:

"*Salamon Alicum, Salamon Alicum, Salamon Alicum,*"—meaning, "Peace be unto thee," using the gestures of the hand touching the head, the lips and breast, signifying, "With my lips I honour, with my head I reverence, and with my heart I love thee."

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